****

**PRAYER FOR REFUGEES**

(For use at Morning or Evening Prayer)

16 November, 2015

**1. Hymn:** Selected according to Liturgical resources available.

**2. Opening Prayer (presider)**

Lord Jesus, today you call us to receive the members of God’s family who arrive to us from distant lands in order to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence and war. Like your disciples, we are full of fear, doubts and suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and minds. Help us with your grace to erase fear from our hearts so that we can embrace each one of your children as our brother and sister and receive refugees with joy and generosity while responding to their many needs. Amen.

**3. Psalm 126 (antiphonally)**

Ant. 1 Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.

**Psalm 126**
*Just as you share in sufferings so you will share in the divine glory*(2 Corinthians 1:7).

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.

The heathens themselves said: “What marvels
the Lord worked for them!”
What marvels the Lord worked for us!
Indeed we were glad.

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap.

They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come
carrying their sheaves.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
— as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

**Psalm-prayer**

*Lord, you have raised us from the earth; may you let the seeds of justice, which we have sown in tears, grow and increase in your sight. May we reap in joy the harvest we hope for patiently.*

Ant. 1 Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.

**4. A reading from St. Augustine’s Exposition on Psalm 125 (126)** *en ps.* 125.13

**READER 1:** Consider all the ways in which almsgiving can be practiced, beloved. Certainly there are beggars to whom you should give alms, for they are in want. Perhaps you are also aware of some need suffered by your own kin, and then you offer help if Christ is in you; and you offer it to strangers too. And the same holds good for beggars among themselves; professional beggars, I mean. Even they have the means to give help to one another in times of trouble. God has not so abandoned them that they lack the opportunity to prove their worth through almsgiving. One person is disabled and cannot walk; let another who can walk lend his feet to the lame man. Let someone who can see lend her eyes to the blind. And let one who is young and healthy lend his strength to another who is old or ill and carry him. This one is in need; the other is rich.….

**READER 2:** You must not think that people who lack money are the only ones who are poor. Be sensitive to each person’s needs, to the particular area in which he or she is poor, because you are perhaps rich in that respect and in a position to lend what you have. You may lend your strong limbs, and that is better than lending money. Or the other may need advice, and you are full of it. He or she is poor in this matter, while you are rich in good counsel. It costs you no labor and you lose nothing by giving it. Give good advice and you have given alms. ….

**READER 3:** Do not restrict your concern to yourselves, but have a care for the needs of those around you. This entails hard work and bitter trouble in the present life, but do not tire. You are sowing in tears, but you will reap with joy. Does not your own experience confirm it, my brothers and sisters? A farmer goes out to plough, carrying his seed. Is the wind not cold sometimes? Does the rain not daunt him? He looks at the sky and it is lowering; he shivers with cold; yet he gets on with the job and sows. He cannot afford to pay too much attention to the gloomy weather and wait for a bright day, for time is slipping by and he must not put his harvest at risk. You must not put it off either, brothers and sisters. Sow in winter, so good works even as you weep, *for those who sow in tears will reap with joy*. They scatter good will and good works as their seed.

**5. Moment of silence and reflection.**

**6. Psalm 121 (After the antiphon, each person reads one verse aloud)**

Ant. 2 May the Lord watch over you as you come and as you go.

**Psalm 121**
*Never again will they hunger and thirst, never again know scorching heat (Revelation 7:16)*

I lift up my eyes to the mountains;
from where shall come my help?
My help shall come from the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble!
Let him sleep not, your guard.
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,
Israel’s guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade;
at your right side he stands.
By day the sun shall not smite you
nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil,
he will guard your soul.
The Lord will guard your going and coming
both now and forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
— as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Ant.2  May the Lord watch over you as you come and as you go.

**7. *A READING FROM THE MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS, POPE FRANCIS, FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES***

READER: Faced with these issues, how can the Church fail to be inspired by the example and words of Jesus Christ? The answer of the Gospel is mercy.

In the first place, mercy is a gift of God the Father who is revealed in the Son. God’s mercy gives rise to joyful gratitude for the hope which opens up before us in the mystery of our redemption by Christ’s blood. Mercy nourishes and strengthens solidarity towards others as a necessary response to God’s gracious love, “which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit” (*Rom*5:5). Each of us is responsible for his or her neighbour: we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. Concern for fostering good relationships with others and the ability to overcome prejudice and fear are essential ingredients for promoting the culture of encounter, in which we are not only prepared to give, but also to receive from others. Hospitality, in fact, grows from both giving and receiving.

From this perspective, it is important to view migrants not only on the basis of their status as regular or irregular, but above all as people whose dignity is to be protected and who are capable of contributing to progress and the general welfare. This is especially the case when they responsibly assume their obligations towards those who receive them, gratefully respecting the material and spiritual heritage of the host country, obeying its laws and helping with its needs. Migrations cannot be reduced merely to their political and legislative aspects, their economic implications and the concrete coexistence of various cultures in one territory. All these complement the defense and promotion of the human person, the culture of encounter, and the unity of peoples, where the Gospel of mercy inspires and encourages ways of renewing and transforming the whole of humanity.….

Dear brothers and sisters, migrants and refugees! At the heart of the Gospel of mercy the encounter and acceptance by others are intertwined with the encounter and acceptance of God himself. Welcoming others means welcoming God in person! Do not let yourselves be robbed of the hope and joy of life born of your experience of God’s mercy, as manifested in the people you meet on your journey! I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, Mother of migrants and refugees, and to Saint Joseph, who experienced the bitterness of emigration to Egypt. To their intercession I also commend those who invest so much energy, time and resources to the pastoral and social care of migrants.

**8. Five people of diverse ages, (or diverse cultures, etc) can individually carry a candle (or another similar object) and place it at the foot of the altar, or cross, while a meditative hymn is sung.**

**9. Psalm 122 (A lector can read the verses, while all assembled respond with the antiphon after each verse.)**

Ant. 3 I rejoiced in the good news they told me.

**Psalm 122**
*You have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22)*

I rejoiced when I heard them say:
Let us go to God’s house.
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.

ALL: *I rejoiced in the good news they told me.*

Jerusalem is built as a city
strongly compact.
It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord.

ALL: *I rejoiced in the good news they told me.*

For Israel’s law it is,
there to praise the Lord’s name.
There were set the thrones of judgment
of the house of David.

ALL: *I rejoiced in the good news they told me.*

For the peace of Jerusalem pray:
“Peace be to your homes!
May peace reign in your walls,
in your palaces, peace!”

ALL: *I rejoiced in the good news they told me.*

For love of my brethren and friends
I say: Peace upon you.
For love of the house of the Lord
I will ask for your good.

ALL: *I rejoiced in the good news they told me.*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
— as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Ant. 3 I rejoiced in the good news they told me.

**10. A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS**

**1Kings 17:7-16**

After some time, however, the wadi ran dry, because no rain had fallen in the land. So the word of the LORD came to him: Arise, go to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to feed you. He arose and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the entrance of the city, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called out to her, “Please bring me a small cupful of water to drink.” She left to get it, and he called out after her, “Please bring along a crust of bread.” She said, “As the LORD, your God, lives, I have nothing baked; there is only a handful of flour in my jar and a little oil in my jug. Just now I was collecting a few sticks, to go in and prepare something for myself and my son; when we have eaten it, we shall die.” Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake and bring it to me. Afterwards you can prepare something for yourself and your son. For the LORD, the God of Israel, says: The jar of flour shall not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, until the day when the LORD sends rain upon the earth.” She left and did as Elijah had said. She had enough to eat for a long time—he and she and her household. The jar of flour did not go empty, nor the jug of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD spoken through Elijah.

**11. Moment of reflection. This can be done in silence or shared aloud.**

**12. Gospel canticle: Benedictus o Magníficat.**

Ant.  Remember your Mercy, O Lord.

*Benedictus or Magníficat (antiphonally, and if possible, sung).*

Ant.  Remember your Mercy, O Lord.

**13. Intercessions (The presider reads the introduction and conclusion; the intercessions can be read by distinct individuals.)**

Presider: We call upon Christ, consoler to all who seek refuge in him, saying:

*Lord, have mercy on us and hear our prayer.*

- We pray, Lord, for all people who have died trying to flee from inhumane situations they experience in their countries. Gather them to yourself and fill them with your love and peace.

*Lord, have mercy on us and hear our prayer.*

- We pray, Lord, for all those who are undertaking desperate journeys. Protect them from traffickers, scammers and all who attempt to take advantage of their situation and keep them safe from all of the dangers that exist along their way.

*Lord, have mercy on us and hear our prayer.*

- We pray, Lord, for government leaders, illuminate them with wisdom and goodness. Give them a heart that allows them to put themselves in the skin of all those who are suffering. Seeking not to protect their own interests, but that they can be generous in the defense of the fundamental rights of all refugees who cry for help.

*Lord, have mercy on us and hear our prayer.*

- We pray, Lord, for all of us. Give us the strength and the courage to resist indifference that impedes us from true feelings when we hear the cry, the mourning and the anguish of our brothers and sisters in need.

*Lord, have mercy on us and hear our prayer.*

Presider: God of infinite mercy, we ask you to listen to the prayers we bring to you in faith. Send us your strength and wisdom so that we may discover ways to help our brothers and sisters in need. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**14. Our Father (may be sung).**

God always watches over us with a fatherly love, and so we dare to pray: Our Father.

**15. Final prayer (recited together).**

Make me Merciful, Lord.

You know the depths of my heart and soul. I ask for the grace to be open to the action of your Spirit in me.

Cleanse me from selfishness and all that closes me in on myself. Clear the way before me so that I can become a true child of God.

Help me, Lord, so that my eyes become merciful, not suspicious or judgmental of appearances, but open to see the beauty of my brother and sister’s heart.

Help me, Lord so that I may listen with mercy.

Help me Lord, so that I may speak merciful words of consolation.

Help me Lord, so that my hands may perform merciful works.

Help me, Lord, so that my heart becomes merciful, so that I can hear the suffering of others.

Make me merciful, Lord. Amen.

**16. Final Blessing and Dismissal.**

The Lord be with you.

*R. And with your spirit.*

May almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*R. Amen.*

Let us go in Peace.

*R. Thanks be to God.*

**17. Hymn to the Blessed Mother.**