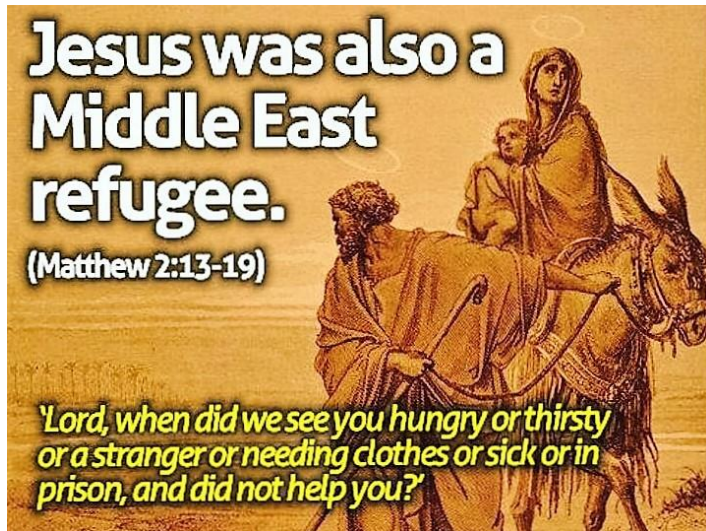


Advent 2016 St. Joseph's and St. Michael's

JESUS THE REFUGEE ---WEEK 2

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain



there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod.

Even though some of us are aware that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees, we may not have considered what that meant beyond the fact that they had to leave their homeland and live 'abroad' for a few years until Herod died.

Jesus and His parents were not even at home when Joseph had the dream to flee. They had prepared themselves to travel to Bethlehem for the census, taking what they felt they might need for that journey, and no more. They were not prepared to go into exile.



For Mary to have to travel so soon after giving birth and with a new born baby to feed and look after would have been harrowing and physically demanding. It would have been extremely tiring, and

travelling at night time would have been difficult and dangerous. Were they up to the journey?

Initially there would have been the **fear** that Herod's men would catch them and kill Jesus. But as they fled the long and often dangerous journey to Egypt, the safer they were in terms of distance, the more **lonely** they would have become, as they got further away from their homeland, their village, their language and customs. There are various ways they could have travelled through Palestine and Sinai into Egypt and all of them would have been dangerous. They must have felt very **alone and afraid**, not knowing what their future was, not knowing where they would get their next meal or lay their heads, or take shelter from the heat or the cold at night. **Uncertainty** would have been their constant companion. But **they were doing what they knew they had to do to survive**, and hope of return was for another day.

As they got used to life in Egypt, their homeland would have still beckoned to them. How were their loved ones at home? Isn't this the same for many of our refugees today.

Prayer

Jesus, who in the company of Mary your mother and Joseph, knew the trials of migration during your exile in Egypt. We pray for the countless migrant, refugee, and displaced children who are so like you.



May they find food and accommodation. May they be received everywhere with love. Jesus protect them from all danger and harm.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution,

violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. "When we got on the boat I was really scared. I was hungry and thirsty and the waves were so big. At the end the boat crashed into some rocks and sank. I fell into the water and I lost all my things." Rasal, 5 ,from Syria.