

ADVENT 2016 -- St Joseph's and St Michaels.

JESUS THE REFUGEE—WEEK 3

We continue our Advent Theme of “Jesus the Refugee” with linking with the thousands of refugees today. Our attention this week has surely been on Aleppo---where they have had no food and no medical aid.

Aleppo is at risk of becoming "one giant graveyard." "We are running out of words to describe the horror we see, while the people of Aleppo are running out of food and medicines and hope."

Words of Pope Francis: “JESUS WAS A REFUGEE. HE HAD TO FLEE TO SAVE HIS LIFE.” Speaking of the growing numbers of refugees Pope Francis called on the church to be “their neighbours, share their fears and take concrete steps to reduce their suffering.”

The suffering on this mother's face as she flees from Aleppo with her child could surely have been Mary with Jesus.



Pope Francis also said: “Refugees are a gift and reflection of the face of God—they are a brother and sister with whom to share bread, home and life. He remembered Jesus words “For I was a stranger and you took me in.” Everyone who knocks on our doors bears the face of Christ.



At Christmas we celebrate many titles for Jesus-----

----- Messiah, Immanuel, Christ, Prince of Peace, Son of God— and these are all powerful and true names. But Jesus is also the refugee, the one forced to flee his home, the politically betrayed and abandoned one, scared and fleeing in the night, nervous at the border, wondering how life will go on. Jesus, Joseph and Mary were all refugees. God was not ashamed to let his son be a refugee. Jesus as refugee is a challenge to Christians this Christmas season.

If Jesus was a refugee today would the church welcome him or miss him altogether.

PRAYERS

---God of the journey , God of the Traveller, we pray for those who leave their homes in search of new beginnings and possibilities, may they know your presence with them.

----Loving God, as we stand before you today, help us to remember that when we speak of immigrants and refugees , we speak of Christ.

-----Gracious God, you who guided Naomi and her family to look for bread in Moab, a foreign land, protect women everywhere who have to leave behind their home or homelands so that they and their families can survive.

-----Compassionate God, may those who are escaping the ravages of war find shelter and sustenance. May the land in which they seek refuge welcome them and treat them with hospitality.

-----Lord may the image of the Holy Family fleeing oppression stay with us this Christmas season as we see thousands fleeing oppression today. Stay with us each night as we are blessed with returning to our home.

