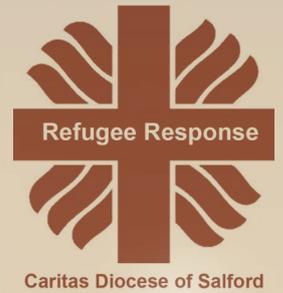


Spring 2016

# Refugee Newsletter

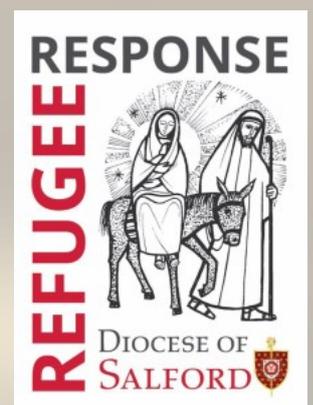


**refugee crisis**  
CALL TO ACTION

**Refugee Conference**

**Bishop Visit to Revive**

**Showing a little mercy**



# Editorial



Welcome to the second Caritas newsletter bringing you updates on Salford Diocese's response to the refugee crisis.

The last few months has seen the migration crisis worsen. More people than ever are entering the European Union through Greece and its President has warned that his country cannot become a 'warehouse for souls'. Refugee numbers are building up on the border to Macedonia and as I write over one thousand people, mainly women and children are sleeping there tonight out in the cold without protection. In Austria, the President has said that his country will not be a 'waiting room for Germany' and Germany says it's already full.

In France, the Calais jungle has been bulldozed away and migrants seeking sanctuary in the UK are being dispersed. We are becoming increasingly concerned for those vulnerable women and children, especially those unaccompanied children now desperate and vulnerable to traffickers and exploitation. Our voices need to be raised, we need to remain active and we need to stay in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need.

*Mark Wiggan*

Diocese of Salford, Refugee co-ordinator

# Refugee Response

## **Report on 'Welcoming Communities - Churches responding to refugees and asylum seekers' conference**

The Cathedral Centre, Salford hosted 90 delegates on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February in response to the current refugee and asylum seeker crisis, locally, nationally and internationally. The conference was organised jointly by Caritas Diocese of Salford, Revive and the Boaz trust. The conference looked at how we can welcome refugees, asylum seekers and all people excluding destitute migrants into Churches and Christian communities, parish groups, voluntary organisations and assist anyone concerned about refugees and asylum seekers. There was an overwhelming positive appreciation that the conference had taken place and very positive feedback on the quality of the information and workshops offered.

The evaluation forms confirmed that the conference was well received and the vast majority of people felt it to be useful, well organised and very good value. Comments included: *So much expertise evident; There was enthusiasm, energy and commitment; Meeting experts and working with people in this field made this a very productive training event; A very informative and vibrant day; I came away with ideas to take back to my parish.*



## **Syrian refugees welcome in Salford Diocese**

Whilst many people welcome the Governments commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees from Syria over the next 5 years there is a growing concern that this is not enough. A more generous response is needed over a shorter time span. Many churches and parishes throughout the UK are ready to respond to the need to resettle Syrian families and support their long journey to the safety that sanctuary in a welcoming country and community can offer.

The Diocese of Salford is ready to mobilise our resources and collaborate with a growing network of people to map the time, talents and resources within the Diocese (including accommodation) which can be put at the service of the refugees and asylum seekers amongst us in order for them to feel welcome. We have submitted a proposal to the Home Office and Refugee Welcome Board to establish a pilot project to support the arrival and resettlement of five Syrian refugee families here in the diocese of Salford. This may be too little but it's not too late.

We are committed and dedicated to accompanying, serving and advocating on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers here in the Diocese of Salford with our partners Revive and the Boaz Trust. As a member of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) we are part of a national network of Catholic organisations working for social justice and through CSAN and CAFOD we are part of Caritas Europe and Caritas International, the official humanitarian and social justice arms of the world-wide Catholic Church.

# CSAN

## **CSAN and Secours Catholique call on French and UK government to prioritise unaccompanied minors in Jungle evictions, Calais**

The local government in Calais ruled for the eviction of the southern part of the Jungle refugee camp on Thursday 25 February, allowing the destruction of hundreds of tents that thousands temporarily call home.

Dr Philip McCarthy, CEO of CSAN said, “no one wants to see the camp continue, however we need more time to assess the welfare of vulnerable unaccompanied minors and put in place proper arrangements to prioritise their health and social needs. It is also vital that unaccompanied minors are afforded the opportunity to be reunited with family members who have found sanctuary in the UK or elsewhere in Europe.”

Vincent De Coninck, Project Manager in Calais for Secours Catholique, CSAN’s partner in France, echoes Dr McCarthy’s statement, “the solution to eradicate the camp is not a solution as long as it does not provide proper solutions for everybody.”

“We would like the camp to disappear in the future and we're ready to collaborate, but it must take time – we have to discuss it with the refugees, experiment and try different solutions. It's as if the government would like to make people disappear before the spring because they are afraid of new arrivals.”

Bernard Thibaud, General Secretary of Secours Catholique adds there is, “a lack of trust between migrants and the government.” Citing an appeal before the Calais state council, he warns against the use of any force against, “people who have been victims of violence throughout their entire journey”.

**For further information on how you or your organisation can help contact Ben Bano on 07887 651117 or Phil Kerton on 01474 873802. To check the latest news, visit their website on**

[www.seekingsanctuary.weebly.com](http://www.seekingsanctuary.weebly.com)



# Bishop Visits Revive

## **“Refugees: Learn English to Combat Hostility”, says Bishop of Salford at Visit to Refugee Charity**

Bishop John Arnold of Salford Diocese recently made his first visit to the asylum seeker charity *Revive*. He went to see first-hand how *Revive* are co-ordinating practical aid for asylum seekers and refugees in Manchester and Salford.



He met with the staff and volunteers

at *Revive*'s drop in centre in Kersal, where the marginalised are given advice, practical help, referrals, and a place to socialise. He then visited the *Revive* offices in Beswick, where there is an Immigration Department.

As Bishop Arnold addressed the refugees present at the drop in centre, Fr Uchenna Odenigbo translated. “Always hold on to hope. Life has been difficult and you’re looking for a better life with us. I wish my country was a little bit more welcoming, but I say you are welcome here. I want you to be easily accepted and to find work, so I would encourage you to learn English – here we are terrible with language, so to learn our language will really help you.”



# Showing a little mercy

## From indifference to mercy to making a difference

*"Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who are fleeing death by war and by hunger, and who are on a path towards a hope for life, the Gospel calls us to be neighbours to the smallest and most abandoned, to give them concrete hope" Pope Francis on 6th September 2015.*

Pope Francis reminds us the 'Only mercy can truly contribute to a more human world' and we must all challenge the 'globalised indifference' that enables injustice in the world to prevail.

His message is that the problem of injustice, where love is absent, is not something for others such as politicians, policy makers and international organisations to address but a personal responsibility of each one of us. The starting point for change, transformation and transformation lies with each one of us - it's a personal agenda with a very personal responsibility for each of us to work in our everyday lives for the common good.

Showing a little mercy is what we all need to do. One way to be merciful is to support refugees and asylum seekers by getting involved. But we cannot do this alone and need the support, enthusiasm and energy of others to walk with us on this journey away from indifference to commitment to the poor, and as Pope Francis says, towards 'a poor Church for the poor'.



# CARITAS REFUGEE RESPONSE APPEAL

## THANKYOU

We are moved by the plight of so many refugees fleeing war and poverty, risking their lives and those of their children to find safety and sanctuary amongst us.

Bishop John Arnold's pastoral letter appeal of the weekend of the 30/31<sup>st</sup> of January included an appeal to parishes to support Caritas and the Refugee Response of the Diocese of Salford and invited us all to support and work with refugees and asylum seekers and all people experiencing homelessness and destitution. He said,



*In our own Diocese of Salford, Caritas is already at work for refugees and asylum seekers. Caritas is also assisting with food banks, day centres, night-shelters and numerous specialised projects to help those in many kinds of need. Pope Francis asks us to reawaken our conscience, to see the face of Christ in the human faces of those in need. Works of charity are at the heart of our missionary and evangelising faith.*

The donations from this appeal will be used to respond to this urgent need. With our partners, Caritas is providing practical help and information to parishes to assist them in discerning their local response to this humanitarian crisis. Within the Diocese of Salford, Caritas is co-ordinating the response to the refugee crisis as well as providing more practical help by way of providing food banks, day centres, night-shelters and numerous specialised projects to help those in many kinds of need. Caritas with our parish partners will also deliver a much needed welcome to refugees and asylum seekers and help meet their immediate and longer term needs through being welcoming communities and supporting the resettlement of people fleeing hunger and war.

Caritas is the official Charity of the Diocese and could not survive without your support. By standing together in solidarity with the poorest of our brothers and sisters we are working in partnership to bring about what Pope Francis has called a 'Poor Church for the Poor'.

Thank you once again for supporting our work with asylum seekers, refugees, the homeless, destitute and alone within our Diocese. We have so much to be thankful for. Thank you. Mark Wiggin, Director of Caritas

[www.caritassalford.org.uk](http://www.caritassalford.org.uk)

# Finding homes for refugees and asylum seekers

## **Guidance for Religious Communities responding to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees**

Pope Francis on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015 asked for tangible demonstrations of help towards refugees. He said, *“May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary of Europe, take in one family.”*

Religious communities, churches, along with other faith groups, have become a key strand in the provision of support for destitute migrants. Many religious congregations in England and Wales see the current refugee crisis as a call to action and an opportunity to express their mission and charism through practical help and corporal acts of mercy that are at the heart of the social gospel.

How then should we respond to this call for action? A guidance paper has been produced by Caritas Refugee Response to suggest that we should respond with both our hearts and our heads. For a copy of the guidance contact Caritas Diocese of Salford

### **Citizens UK**

w: [citizensuk.org](http://citizensuk.org)

Citizens UK has a special section on its website appealing for landlords to come forward in an attempt to find 5,000 suitable homes for Syrian refugees.

### **Positive Action In Housing**

w: [paih.org/host-a-refugee](http://paih.org/host-a-refugee)

This UK-wide charity is building a database of accommodation volunteers who agree to offer up space in their home to a refugee. This can be for a few days, weeks, or even longer. It has a system to ensure destitute refugees and their hosts form the best match.

### **The No Accommodation Network**

w: [nacom.org.uk](http://nacom.org.uk)

NACCOM is an informal network of agencies providing accommodation for migrants who have no recourse to public funds. Most of these are asylum seekers whose asylum claims have been rejected, but for a variety of reasons have not been deported.

[www.caritassalford.org.uk](http://www.caritassalford.org.uk)