

# “Agree with one another, Live in Peace”

(2 Corinthians 13: 11c)

## Refugee Sunday 2011 Worship Resources

### Introduction

The smile of a young internally displaced mother in Darfur connects us to one of the world's 15 million refugees. Waiting for the water supplied by the joint operations of Caritas and the ACT Alliance, she is a visible reminder of what can be done by people helping each other. In a dry and contested land, water is the means of life for people now largely dependent on the help of others.



Sudan has over 1.2 million internally displaced people, the world's largest

population (UNHCR). In a few weeks the country is due to divide into north and south. With many issues and tensions unresolved including in central Abyei and Kordofan, practical assistance and continued prayer are needed. Join with us to pray for an end to the fighting and an agreement that will enable both north and south to live in peace.

*These resources have been prepared using the lectionary readings for Sunday, 19 June 2011, and can be adapted to suit your situation.*

### World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day is acknowledged on June 20 each year to mark the founding of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). In the 60 years since the Refugee Convention was first signed, refugees have made huge contributions around the globe and have provided a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. UNHCR has prepared special resources to feature a few of their stories (see resources). In Aotearoa churches have played a role in helping them find a new community through Refugee Services (formerly Refugee and Migrant Services).

This year's theme is "One refugee without hope is too many". The UNHCR challenges us to "Do 1 thing". Supporting the CWS Sudan Appeal is one way you can bring hope for returning refugees.

ACT/Mohamed Nureldin

### Who is a refugee?

"A refugee is a person who, 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.'"

United Nations Convention on Refugees, 1951

### Who is an internally displaced person?

"Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border."

UNHCR

### Refugee Facts

26 million people are internally displaced. 11.6 million live in Africa. Sudan, Colombia and Iraq have the largest numbers.

15.1 million refugees are under care of UNHCR and 4.7 million Palestinians under the care of UNWRA.

( <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c11.html> )

June 19 is Trinity Sunday in the church calendar. It marks the time when we celebrate the mystery of God, the Creator, Redeemer and Spirit. It is also the beginning of Ordinary Time which continues to Advent.

### Gathering Prayer

Listen for the voice of God,  
Sing of the love that unites us as your human family,  
Encounter the mystery of the creation/  
**Together we come in worship and in praise to God who is with us and with those who have lost family and homes.**  
**Amen**

### Lectionary Readings

*Gen 1:1-2:4a*

This reading focuses on the creation of the cosmos, the solar system, plants, animals and human beings. In God's creation everything and everybody has a place. What God created was good (v25, 31). What humans are doing to it is not always good. Hearing this story provides an opportunity to reconsider how we tend to the creation and take responsibility for its good health. When the climate changes, waterways are polluted and tensions rise, how does our relationship with God challenge us to face the truth of life on our planet. How do we deal with growing poverty and rising social tension, towards migrants and refugees, or people different from ourselves?

*Psalms 8*

The psalmist praises God with words of exaltation. God's majesty can be seen in the moon and the patterns of the stars that light the night sky. The psalmist wonders why God bothers with humans (v3). It parallels the Genesis text, by affirming the place of humanity 'a little lower than God' (v 5). When both texts were written most people would have seen themselves at the mercy of the gods/God. Life was precarious and death frequent. Science has given us greater awareness of the earth's processes but this does not mean that we can exploit and destroy the planet. Looking at the stars can help to remind us of our place in the cosmos.

*2 Corinthians 13:11-13*

Paul ends his letter with some straightforward advice to his readers or hearers. It is worth exploring each direction further. Ordering our lives, listening, agreeing with others, and living in peace are a blueprint of how to live respecting both God's creation and each other. They challenge us to be more expansive in our understanding of our faith. What can we do today to make sure we live in peace sure in the knowledge of God's love. Paul concludes with the familiar 'apostolic blessing' in v 13.

*Matthew 28:16-20*

It can be a challenge to read a familiar passage like the Great Commission with new eyes. It is sometimes helpful to approach such readings from a different angle. What do we know of 'all nations'? Churches often emphasise the 'go' of the text and the imperative to convert people to Christianity. There is more to the instructions, baptising and teaching the commandments are as much part of the commission. What does it mean to 'make disciples' today? How do we teach people to 'love their neighbour as themselves' when in the global village, that neighbour may live on the other side of the world or come from an altogether unfamiliar cultural background?

### Children's Talk

Show pictures of people from different cultures and traditions. There are some resources on the UNHCR site. Hopefully you can introduce them by name and talk a little about the place from where they come (include a few refugees or people who live in conflict zones). You could say 'I want you to meet...'. All of these people share the earth on which we live. God makes room for everyone. Some of these people have had to leave their homes because of war and destruction as refugees. Paul told us to live in peace. How do you think we can help the world to live in peace? Turn their suggestions into a simple prayer.



Over 17 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

**1 family forced to flee  
is too many.**



## Questions for reflection

- How can we connect with refugees in our world and our communities?
- What does it mean to love our neighbour in a world where we can so easily forget about the suffering and impoverished?
- What practical steps can we do to help people in our communities learn to live with and accommodate those from different traditions and cultures?



## Prayer for Refugees

O God we turn to you this day  
Knowing that so many people are in distress  
They have lost family, homes and all that is familiar.  
Knowing that so many people long for an end to the  
war and violence that encompasses their lives, for  
woman who have been raped and abused, for  
young men forced to fight or die, for all who have  
been injured.

Knowing that some people see war and  
warmongering as the only path of action, when the  
people would rather have food and security.

We pray for the people of Sudan as they move  
towards two countries with many issues to resolve  
and new outbreaks of violence. Open the hearts of  
those intent on grabbing all that they can, using  
violence to hold on to oil and to intimidate local  
populations. Help them to let go and allow a new  
future to develop where peace is the currency of  
negotiations.

We pray for all those meeting the daily needs of  
those who have been made homeless and  
stateless. We pray for the many all ready poor  
communities who share their scant resources with  
refugees and internally displaced people. We pray  
for those who have it within their power to stop  
selling the weapons and ideas that breed hate and  
war.

And we pray for our own communities, where  
tensions exist and we sometimes find it difficult to  
deal with our differences. We pray especially for  
those who are suffering and traumatized by the  
experience of life.

*contd...*

*Making Pottery in Darfur, ACT Alliance /P Jeffrey*

*contd...*

Bring your peace into our world. The peace that binds  
us together as your people and the peace that  
confronts us with new ways of living where once again  
we can say God created the world and it is very good.  
In the name of the Prince of Peace, we pray.

**Amen**

## Prayer of Departure

We go with your word in our heads and in our hearts  
We go warmed by the songs of our faith  
We go marvelling at the vigour of your Creation.  
We go into all the world, knowing that you are with us,  
giving the strength we need to live wisely and  
peacefully.

**In Jesus' Name Amen**

## Suggested Hymns

All my hope in God is founded WOV 465  
All will be well AA 2  
Brother, sister, let me serve you AA8  
Christ from whom all blessings flow WOV 364  
Christ is our peace AA16  
God of Freedom, God of Justice AA50  
Here to the house of God we come AA 61  
How happy you who work for peace AA63  
I heard the voice of Jesus say WOV 500  
I the Lord of sea and sky  
Let there be light WOV 671  
Tell My People I Love them AA132  
Will you come and follow me

### On Another's Sorrow

Can I see another's woe  
And not be in sorrow too.  
Can I see another's grief  
And not seek for kind relief.

Can I see a falling tear,  
And not feel my sorrows share,  
Can a father see his child,  
Weep, nor be with sorrow filled.

Can a mother sit and hear,  
An infant groan an infant fear-  
No no never can it be.  
Never never can it be.

And can he who smiles on all  
Hear the wren with sorrows small,  
Hear the small birds grief & care  
Hear the woes that infants bear-

And not sit beside the nest  
Pouring pity on their breast,  
And not sit the cradle near  
Weeping tear on infant's tear. . .

He doth give his joy to all.  
He becomes an infant small.  
He becomes a man of woe  
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not, thou canst sigh a sigh,  
And thy maker is not by.  
Think not, thou canst weep a tear,  
And thy maker is not near.

O! he gives to us his joy,  
That our grief he may destroy  
Till our grief is fled & gone  
He doth sit by us and moan.

*William Blake 1757-1827*



*ACT Alliance/ P Jeffrey*

### Resources

The United Nations Refugee Agency - UNHCR (for pictures, video clips, games, quizzes. Statistics, stories and links to other resources).  
<http://www.unhcr.org/do1thing/index.php>

ACT Alliance (stories and information on emergency situations) <http://www.actalliance.org/>

The Enough Project advocates against genocide, particularly in the US political system. It includes news reports and testimony on Darfur and South Sudan ACT Alliance (stories and information on <http://www.enoughproject.org/>

The Churches Agency on International Issues produced Hot Topics , *Immigration Matters*. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.cws.org.nz/resources/international.asp> or requested from CWS.

Refugee Services (formerly the Refugee and Migrant Service) <http://www.refugeeservices.org.nz/>

Relief Web (information on humanitarian situations) : <http://reliefweb.int/home>



**Please consider holding a special collection to help refugees and displaced people.**



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