Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants

On June 22, the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, we reflect and pray for the refugees resettled in New Zealand, who often face a long and difficult task of bringing together families scattered by war and conflict.

"It is very sad to live so far from people, not to be able to help my own family," Luz fled Colombia to Ecuador with her son after family members were threatened with violence, but other family members remained behind. "I was always afraid that something bad was going to happen to them." After being resettled in New Zealand as a United Nations refugee quota, Luz wanted to bring her family also to safety, but the cost and difficulties at first seemed prohibitive. However, through the support of the Wellington Refugee Family Reunification Trust and St Joseph’s parish, Mt Victoria, the funds were raised to bring Luz’s family to New Zealand and to safety. "When the family is here, for me, it is incredible. I am forever grateful, forever in my heart" Luz also thanks the Wellington Refugee Family Reunification Trust and Auckland Refugee Family Trust.

Thank you to all our supporters who have once again given generously to the Bishops’ Lent Appeal. We have raised $1,000,000 and that figure continues to rise as donations are still trickling in. Thank you for helping us to open up a horizon of hope.

Yes, I would like to provide hope through Caritas.

Mr / Mrs / Miss

First Name: ___________________________
Surname: ___________________________
Address: ___________________________
Phone: ___________________________
Email: ___________________________

I would like to (tick all that apply):

• Give a donation
• Find out about making a bequest
• Find out about regular giving
• Receive newsletters by post
• Receive newsletters by email (please supply email address above)

Enclosed is my gift as a cheque for:

• $500
• $250
• $100
• $50
• $20 or $________
or please charge my credit card:

Visa / Mastercard / Bankcard / Access

Exp. Date: ___________________________ Card Security Code: ___________________________
Signature: ___________________________

Send to: Caritas PO Box 12-193 Wellington 6144. Freepost 689

Volunteer Report SOLOMON ISLANDS

Miranda Williamson, a researcher in Wellington, volunteered with Caritas’ overseas volunteer arm, Mahitahi, assisting the Archbishop of Honiara to create order and increase the confidence and skills of the staff in managing their archives. Living with the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary, I pitched in with cooking and cleaning and I enjoyed the rhythm of daily life with this group of kind and devout women. The days were long, prayers began at 5:35 am and we piled in the van and were at mass by 6:15am. The Cathedral was open-sided and it was stunning to see the sun rise during mass as the city woke up and the day began.

I enjoyed the work in the archive and found ways to contribute to the organisation of the material. Like most of the Solomon Islanders I met, my counterparts were hardworking, patient, resilient and committed to their families. There were always people wanting to talk about their relatives in New Zealand, the price of cell phones or whatever gossip was splashed across the eccentric and somewhat unreliable local paper.

In my last week the flooding hit and the river rose higher than anyone could remember. We saw trees, pigs and people being swept along in the swift current. People soon searched the river mouth looking for missing family members. The water and power were cut, and it kept raining. The parish hall became one of the evacuee centres and sheltered hundreds of people. I helped with the distribution of water, rice, tinned fish, sugar, coffee, instant noodles and mosquito nets. It was inspiring to see everyone pull together to make the best of a terrible situation.

I felt very blessed to have had this opportunity to work and live in the Solomon Islands. I would encourage everyone to consider volunteering for Mahitahi. I gained so much from the experience and will always treasure the time I spent in the Solomons.

Miranda

Visit www.mahitahi.org if you are interested in volunteering overseas.

STUNNING SUNRISES AND THE PRICE OF CELL PHONES

If you would like to support us, you can do so:

BY INTERNET BANKING

Make a direct deposit from your bank account to ours via the internet:

• Caritas account number: 030 518 021 1216 00
• Please include the following in the reference section of your online form:
  • Your Caritas reference number (if known)
  • Your surname (include initials if space allows) and email us at caritas@caritas.org.nz with your full name, postal address and details of your payment so we can send a receipt.

BY CREDIT CARD

• Visit us online at www.caritas.org.nz/donate and click ‘Donate online now’;
• Phone us at 04 496 1742 or freephone 0800 22 10 22 (during office hours: Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm);

BY POST

Send us a cheque or credit card details using the coupon on the left, or ask for information about our regular giving programme or making a bequest.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand

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A group at Challenge 2000 in Johnsonville, Wellington. PHOTO: ADRIAN NEKE

THE CARITAS CHALLENGE

Our inaugural Caritas Challenge was a huge success, with over 6,000 young people across the country taking up the challenge to walk in someone else’s shoes for 24 hours and to raise awareness and funds for Solomon Islands.

From Invercargill to Whangarei, young people engaged in activities around four themes - ‘Live it’, ‘Work it’, ‘Sweat it’ and ‘Stop it’, to bring them closer to living conditions of those less fortunate. Youth slept overnight in makeshift cardboard box homes, worked in sweatshop like conditions, went without food and walked long distances to collect water.

As Challenge events began on Friday morning, news arrived of the flooding in Solomon Islands, which made the activities all the more significant. Funds raised will support Solomon Islands, with water and sanitation programmes, early childhood education teacher training, rural training centres and a centre for the deaf.

Mark your diaries – the 2015 Caritas Challenge will be on 27-28 March 2015.

COMING UP IN THE JUSTICE AND PEACE DIARY

4 JULY
Mufti Mania Day raising funds for St Joseph’s Technical College in Tonga.

15 JULY, 7-9PM

17-18 JULY
Edmund Rice Centre: Advocacy in Aotearoa Conference. St Peter’s College, Grafton, Auckland.

5 AUGUST, 6-9PM

10 AUGUST, 1-5PM

8-12 SEPTEMBER
Caritas Oceania Forum, Tonga.

14-20 SEPTEMBER
Social Justice Week, the theme this year is Catholic social teaching.

4 OCTOBER
Mass with Bishop Pat Dunne to launch the Caritas report on Environment in the Pacific. Auckland.

SYRIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

Since civil war broke out in Syria three years ago, 11.8 million people inside and outside of the country are in need of humanitarian assistance. Over 2.5 million Syrians have fled to neighbouring countries. The majority of these refugees are in Jordan and Lebanon, the region’s two smallest countries. Their weak infrastructure and limited resources are nearing a breaking point under the strain of the refugees.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has partnered with Caritas Lebanon to help some of the 1.2 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon and provide support for host communities under stress. Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand has raised $305,000 for the crisis and is still accepting donations.

SUPER TYPHOON HIAYAN, PHILIPPINES

When Typhoon Haiyan, known locally as Yolanda, swept through the Philippines, thousands of people died, millions fled their homes, and villages and towns were totally destroyed. Through generous support from individuals, parishes, schools and Government grants in New Zealand, Caritas Aotearoa will provide $1.5 million over three years to assist in the recovery.

Caritas’ Anna Robertson speaks to Shirley, a woman we were able to help in Tacloban, Pablardo. PHOTO: MARK MITCHELL.

The focus is on providing longer-term recovery to help people build back their lives better and reduce reliance on emergency aid. Caritas Internationalis, of which Caritas Aotearoa is a part, is launching a three year recovery programme for 100,000 people in the worst hit areas.

SOLOMON ISLANDS FLOODING

The worst flooding in 28 years to hit Solomon Islands resulted in 23 deaths and 15,000 people fleeing their homes. Three days of heavy rains in early April caused the flash floods which washed out roads and destroyed bridges in the capital of Honiara. Generous Caritas supporters responded to the flooding, with over $85,000 raised for relief and recovery activities.

TONGA TROPICAL CYCLONE IAN

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand supported Caritas Tonga to assist communities to recover and rebuild after Tropical Cyclone Ian devastated the Ha’apai islands of Tonga. They provided drinking water, trauma counseling, food and non food items. They also organised replanting of crops like corn and taro. It is estimated that 75 per cent of buildings in Ha’apai had been destroyed or had major damage, with crops, infrastructure and water supplies also having sustained significant damage.

SINGOUT4JUSTICE

Over 30 young song writers from around New Zealand composed lyrics and performed songs on ways to help improve the lives of people struggling with poverty, oppression, injustice or hopelessness, for our Singout4Justice competition.

Junior winner: Waiting, by Jessica Hannah Rogers, Year 10, Carmel College, Auckland. Senior winners: Hide and Seek, by Maizy Start Walter and Tobias Girod, Year 13 from Campion College, Gisborne.

Tobias Girod and Mary Start Walter of Campion College, Gisborne won the Year 11-13 section with their song, Hide and Seek.
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