

At this Vigil for Peace, we pray for Refugees.

We pray for the 60 million people who are either internally displaced or who have fled their countries because of conflict, persecution or natural disasters.

We pray for those living in temporary settlements for years on end, in a state of limbo, their lives on hold, hopelessness chipping away at their resolve, who feel forgotten, cast aside, worthless. We pray for those in Direct Provision in our own country and those in camps on borders around the world.

We pray for people in Bangladesh who have had to flee their homes because of rising seas, land erosion and floods, all caused by *our* over-consumption and our excessive relentless emissions. Many of them flee to the cities where they live in squalor and are exploited, often to the point of slavery, by the garment industries, the same ones that provide *our* clothes.

We pray for people in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Ethiopia, who are becoming displaced from their land and thousands of hectares are being deforested by large multi-nationals to grow cash crops that will then be exported for our food. Food that we then waste at such a rate that it is estimated Western countries throw away the equivalent of what the entire continent of Africa produces in a year. We are reminded of Ireland in the 1850s, where 1.5 million people decided that leaving was better than staying to die of starvation, and all the while vast quantities of wheat, oats and barley were being exported out of Ireland to feed the British population. The devastation that food for profit instead of food for survival causes is still imposed on nations today. Since 2013, the U.S. has sent food aid to South Sudan all the while exporting vast from crops from thousands of hectares of land they have acquired in South Sudan for sale supermarkets across America.

We pray for people who are displaced in the Democratic Republic of Congo due to lack of Governance and ongoing civil war. 5 million people have died since the late 1990s and millions more have been displaced and live in destitution and in fear of militia. These wars have been exacerbated by the mass mining of DRCs natural resources to provide the minerals (cobalt, gold, tin) needed for our phones, our electronics and our jewellery. We pray for those impoverished communities in South Africa who have not fled when international mining companies have set up shop on their doorsteps and are now living in areas ten times more toxic and radioactive than Chernobyl because of uranium dumping.

In many instances, the destitution that people are fleeing to, bears no thought for what they must be fleeing from. Often the poorest communities bear the brunt of welcoming thousands and tens and thousands of others who have lost their homes.

So as we pray for refugees worldwide, we recognise our own interconnectedness, our own complicity through relentless consumerism that perpetuates the suffering and displacement of millions around the world.

All of us are on a journey. None of us have arrived.

We pray that our cry for change would challenge us and move us to respond in a way that we become the answer to our own prayers. May we be willing to curb our lifestyles and to demand that

production and supply of goods promote peace, through food security, land rights and fairly obtained, fairly traded goods.

God is closer to you than your breath. May He bring you peace. But may He also keep you restless and hungry for the peace of all people.

Disturb us O Lord. Amen