



THE LAMPEDUSA CROSS

A Year of Mercy pilgrimage on the refugee crisis

“We have seen the face of Jesus in the face of every refugee.”

(Archbishop Nikolaos Printezis, Lesbos, Greece)



Leader: Welcome and introduction

In this Year of Mercy, Pope Francis invites us all to make a pilgrimage, to mark “an extraordinary moment of grace and spiritual renewal”. (*Misericordiae Vultus*)

The idea of pilgrimage is especially powerful in the light of the current migration crisis. More people than ever before in human history are now on forced journeys far from home.

This pilgrimage is a way for us to show solidarity with all those fleeing war, poverty and persecution in our world. Along the way, we reflect, “Who is my neighbour?”



Stage 1: Forced out by war

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever. (*Ps 136*)

Leader: We have come here to pray in solidarity with the 60 million people in our world who have been forced from their homes by war and persecution. We will go home after meeting here today; they may never see their homes again.

Reader 1: Amina is living in a displaced people's camp in Darfur. "I was sleeping when I heard our village being attacked. I didn't know who was shooting at us or why, their faces were covered. First they came on camels and horses, then they came in heavy vehicles, and then they came on foot. There was so much screaming, people running, and fire everywhere. I was so afraid I just ran. I didn't even put my shoes on."

Silence

Leader: (*Holds up world map*)

Let's stop to think about where today's refugees are coming from. These are the top ten nations ranked by number of people forced out of their countries by fighting, persecution and human rights violations:

Reader 2: Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia;

Reader 3: South Sudan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo;

Reader 4: Central African Republic, Myanmar, Eritrea, Iraq.

Leader: Meanwhile the number of refugees who can return home has dropped. This means that many will be stranded for years to come.

Reader 5: Pope Francis tells us: "They are men and women like us... seeking a better life, starving, persecuted, wounded, exploited, victims of war." (*19 April, 2015*)

Leader: We pray for all the places in the world where there is war, where people have to leave their homes because of violence.

**Group: God of mercy,
pour out your peace upon us,
so that nation will no longer lift sword against nation,
nor learn to make war. Amen.** (*Is. 2:4*)

Stage 2: Forced out by poverty and climate change

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Leader: (*Holds up loaf of bread*)

One in six people will go to bed hungry tonight. Dire conditions for the world's poorest people are being made worse by climate change, which is hitting them first, and hardest. Like Abraham who was forced on a long journey by famine, people must sometimes move to look for ways to make a living. Yet people question the right of migrants to seek better lives for themselves and their families.

Reader 1: Seline Netoi lives on the Carteret islands in the South Pacific, where rising sea levels mean her whole community must leave before the islands are completely under water. "It's our home, it will be difficult to leave but we must. When the King Tide comes, water floods our home. If there is a cyclone or a tsunami, we'll be swept away. I was a war refugee and now I'll be a climate one."

Reader 2: "The world is a gift which we have freely received and must share with others... Let us not only keep the poor of the future in mind, but also today's poor, whose life on this earth is brief and who cannot keep on waiting." (*Pope Francis, Laudato Si, #159, 162*)

Silence

Leader: We pray for a more equal distribution of the goods of creation. We pray for a sense of sacred responsibility to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

**Group: O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.
Amen.**

(Pope Francis, Laudato Si', A prayer for our earth)

SONG: The Lord hears the cry of the poor (*Laudate 892*)

Stage 3: Forced out by persecution

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Leader: (*Holds up passport*)

Groups who seem different because of colour, religion or ethnic background are too often pushed aside, or even persecuted and tortured. Persecution is a major cause of migration. Refugees' official identity is robbed from them as they lose their homes and countries. Yet in God's eyes we all share one true identity - as his children.

Reader 1: In Myanmar, a Muslim minority are being driven from their homes by violence. The government does not recognise them as citizens. Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon says, "It breaks my heart to see the rising hatred and religious intolerance in Myanmar. From the depths of my heart... I cry out two words to my brothers and sisters from all communities in my beloved country: 'peace' and 'love'."

Reader 2: We think of all the different faiths and minority groups who are being unjustly persecuted around the world.

Silence

Leader: During his ministry, Jesus is persecuted in his home country. People are out to kill him, and they deny his identity as the Son of God.

Reader 3: "They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him off the cliff, but he passed straight through the crowd and walked away." (*Luke 4:29-30*)

Leader: We pray to the God of mercy for tolerance, and the grace to see that we are all his children. In the words of Pope Francis: "No more death! No more exploitation! There is always time to change... there is always the time to implore the mercy of God." (*Ciudad Juarez, Feb 2016*)

Group: God of all humanity,

In a world full of fear, open our hearts to your love.

Though we walk in desolate valleys,

Open our minds to your hope.

We turn from hatred, towards love.

We turn from intolerance,

Towards understanding.

We commit ourselves to compassion.

Together, not alone, we pray for peace.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

(Linda Jones, CAFOD)

Stage 4: The journey

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Leader: Look down at what you are wearing. If you have a bag, think about what's in it. Now close your eyes. Imagine you are being forced to leave your home by the sounds of fighting. *(Pause)* You can't pack, you just leave as you are. These clothes and the few things in your bag are all you will have for many weeks. You don't know if you will ever come home. *(Pause)*

Reader 1: Tiba is a Darfuri woman forced out of her village by heavy fighting. She now lives in a displaced people's camp. "Early in the morning, when the men with guns were saying prayers, we quickly made our departure. I didn't let this purse out of my sight, I kept it hidden inside my garment. It holds two important things: my identity card and my mobile phone. My ID card is proof that I am a citizen of Darfur, and my phone will one day bring me news of peace in my village. On that day I will return."

Silence

Reader 2: "Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother with you, and escape into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him.' So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead." *(Matthew 2:13-15)*

Leader: The journeys made by migrants and refugees are often long and dangerous. Travelling in locked shipping containers or flimsy dinghies, they risk their lives in the hope of finding a place of safety.

Reader 3: Aza is a 21-year-old mother with an infant son. She crossed to Greece in a boat after fleeing Syria: "They told us that there would be 35 people in our boat, but when we arrived, there were more than 200. We were in the sea and the engine stopped. It was full of smoke. My son was vomiting and he couldn't breathe. I was praying to God so he could save us. I saw lots of people pray. All of them were crying. And all of them were scared."

Silence

Leader: For refugees on long journeys, we pray for safe passage, hearts filled with courage, strength to support children and the weak, and at the journey's end, a true welcome.

Group: Lord, you walked alongside those who suffer. Give us mercy in our hearts, to pour balm on the injured feet of those who walk.

(adapted from words of Pope Francis, Address to Mexican bishops, 2016)

SONG: I will be with you *(Laudate 866)*

Stage 5: Lost family

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Leader: Could you all hold up your photo of family and friends, if you have one – perhaps on your phone? *(Pause)* Forced migration rips apart families and communities. Some are left behind because they are too weak, or there is not enough money to pay for their passage; some get lost or die on the way. Imagine being forced to choose between members of your family – who to take, who to leave.

Silence

Reader 1: Khawle is a Syrian mother of four who is now in a refugee camp in Lebanon. She looks at a photo of her family taken in the camp. "I couldn't bring all the members of my family with me. The youngest is with my mother. The bombs stopped us from being together... I don't have anything to be happy for, just to live like this, here in our tent. I feel sad to be here without all my children. A photograph speaks of family happiness, everyone smiling together. This photograph is full of tears."

Silence

Leader: Our Church teaches how important it is for families to be able to stay together. As the US bishops have said: "A merciful immigration policy will not force married couples or children to live separated from their families for long periods."

(US Conference of Catholic Bishops, On Immigration and the Movement of Peoples)

Reader 2: "Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life... Don't we all want a better, more decent and prosperous life to share with our loved ones?"

(Pope Francis, Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 17 January 2016)

(Everyone take the hand of the person next to them and form a circle or chain.)

Reader 3: "Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ... If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it." *(1 Corinthians 12:12, 26)*

Leader: We pray for families and friends separated by the trauma of conflict and migration, that they may soon be reunited.

**Group: We are one body, different parts,
One family, spread throughout the world.
We feel one hurt
as war and injustice force loved ones apart.
Living Christ, work through us,
as we open our hearts to all those in need
So that there may be
one hope, one joy, one welcome in you.
Amen.**

Stage 6: Welcome – or rejection

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Leader: What will happen to migrants at their journey's end? Most refugees, nearly nine out of ten, are taken in by poor countries, not by rich nations like ours. We think of them in camps, in detention centres, waiting to hear if they will be allowed to stay, hoping to be joined by their families. Those who do make it here after unimaginable difficulties may face hostility and long periods in detention or destitution, rather than finding the security they so badly need.

Reader 1: "These migrants are like cockroaches..." (*The Sun, April 2015*)

Reader 2: "Immigrants take jobs and make the country overcrowded." (*A young person at an anti-racism workshop in 2014*)

Leader: As people of faith, we believe the earth was given by God equally to all, so we can speak with loving hearts, with welcome, without fear.

Reader 3: Archbishop Desmond Tutu praises the people of the Greek islands who are helping so many refugees passing through. In his words: "Imagine 900,000 visitors at your door, hungry, exhausted, distressed. What do you do? You open the door. Incredible!"

Silence

Leader: People say that it is not practical to welcome large numbers of migrants, and our governments do need border policies. But our Church believes these must be based on justice, mercy, and the common good, not on self-interest.

Reader 1: Leila has been a refugee twice. A Palestinian, she was a refugee in Syria until fighting forced her on a frightening journey to the UK. When she arrived, aged 21, she felt weak, fearful and completely alone. She slept rough for a long time, in parks and railway stations. But somehow she found her way to the Cardinal Hume centre, where she found welcome and a room in their hostel. She now has a part time job, is learning English and work skills. "The staff are so good here," she says. "They are not like officials – they are friendly and respect you. I started to feel safe."

Reader 2: We think of the words of St Paul: "Remember always to welcome strangers, for by doing this, some people have entertained angels without knowing it." (*Hebrews 13:2*)

Silence

Leader: Let us say together, in response to the suffering on so many faces:

Group: In your compassion and mercy, Lord, have pity on us... cleanse us from our sins and create in us a pure heart, a new spirit. May we be the beating heart and the accompanying feet of the Church that opens her arms and sustains. (*From Pope Francis's Ciudad Juarez homily, Mexico, 17 February 2016*)

SONG: Ubi caritas (*Laudate 244*) or Hymn of the Jubilee of Mercy

Stage 7: Cross of Compassion, Door of Mercy

Leader: He led his people through the desert.

Group: For his mercy endures forever.

Reader 1: A rough cross made of driftwood stands today in the British Museum. It was given by Sicilian carpenter Francesco Tuccio, who made the first such cross from the wreckage of a boat that sank off the island of Lampedusa.

Reader 2: The boat was carrying 500 refugees from Eritrea and Somalia when it capsized. 349 people died. The local carpenter carved and offered crosses to survivors as a symbol of their rescue and a sign of hope. One of his crosses was recently carried through the great Door of Mercy at St Peter's basilica.

(Leader hands a card showing an image of the cross to each person.)

Reader 3: "How much these people have suffered!" declared the Pope in Lampedusa. "And their cry rises up to God! ... Has any one of us wept because of this situation and others like it? *(July 2013)*

Reader 4: St Paul himself was a shipwreck survivor who also experienced the kindness of strangers *(Acts 27-28)*: "For a number of days both the sun and the stars were invisible and the storm raged unabated until at last we gave up all hope of surviving... In all we were two hundred and seventy-six souls on board that ship... Once we had come safely through, we discovered that the island was called Malta. The inhabitants treated us with unusual kindness. They made us all welcome by lighting a huge fire because it had started to rain and the weather was cold."

Leader: As we prepare to enter the Door of Mercy, we ask our Heavenly Father to make us merciful as he is merciful:

Sing or say the Kyrie / Lord have mercy

Leader: Kyrie eleison

Group: Kyrie eleison

Leader: Christe eleison

Group: Christe eleison

Leader: Kyrie eleison

Group: Kyrie eleison

Leader: Jesus, bringer of mercy and justice... **Group: Have mercy on us.**

Jesus, protector of the migrant...

Jesus, voice against violence...

Jesus, courage for the lowly...

Jesus, closest to the poor...

Jesus, source of light and hope...

Leader: In the hope of God's mercy in this Jubilee year, we now enter through the Holy Door.

(All enter through the Door of Mercy if applicable, or form a circle with joined hands.)

Leader: For the grace to care for the suffering... **Group: Grant us your mercy.**

For the grace to feed the hungry...

For the grace to welcome the stranger...

For the grace to stand in solidarity...

For the grace to reject injustice...

For the grace to love...

Leader: We grieve for those lost on the journey, we celebrate those who survive. Let's sit and reflect in prayer on all we have heard, and on the works of mercy Pope Francis asks us to perform – written on your sheets. We then each write our own message of hope for refugees and migrants on our card. These messages will be collected together and sent on to be shared with refugees in the UK or around the world.

(All sit and reflect and write.)

- ❖ *Corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead.*
- ❖ *Spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.*

(Gather the group back together once they have had time to write their messages and ask the pilgrims to place the message half of their card with the other symbols – map, bread, passport, photos – in your chosen area.)

Leader: "God gives strength to the weary, those who hope in the Lord will regain their strength, though they run they will not grow weary, though they walk they will never tire." (*Isaiah 13:29-31*)

Group: "From the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it. Every time someone is in need, he or she can approach it, because the mercy of God never ends." (*Misericordiae Vultus, Pope Francis*)

Leader: As we prepare to leave this place, and to go back out into the world, let us commit to do all that we can to be merciful as our Father is merciful, and to reach out a hand of welcome and compassion to our neighbours who are in need. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all on our journey through life and for ever.

Group: Amen.

SONG: Though the mountains may fall (*Laudate 785*) or say the Hail Holy Queen together as a group.