



World Day of Migrants & Refugees

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On September 26, 2021, St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Mississauga, staffed by the Scalabrinian Missionaries, celebrated 107th International World Day of Migrants and Refugees, united with the rest of the whole Catholic Church. This year Pope Francis endorses the theme, Towards An Ever Wider “We”, in order to indicate a clear horizon for our common journey in this world. St. Catherine of Siena parish community came together as Church from diverse nations to celebrate the living presence of Christ in migrants and refugees around the world in communion of diversity.



The Eucharistic celebration began with the song, We are One Body, the Body of Christ, in English and Spanish as international flags were brought up to the altar. The readings were proclaimed in Italian, English and Spanish and the prayers of the Faithful were expressed in 8 different languages as parishioners wore their colorful native dress. Upon concluding the Service, the participants together in unity sang, the National Anthem ‘O Canada’ in honor of this great land and nation.

Afterwards, all were invited to share an ‘Agape’ in the main hall, which took place from 12 different countries, keeping our distance of course during this pandemic.

Pope Francis in his Encyclical Fratelli Tutti, stated, *“that we are all in the same boat and called to work together so that there will be no more walls that separate us, no longer others, but only a single “we”, encompassing all of humanity. Thus, I would like to use this World Day to address a twofold appeal, first to the Catholic faithful and then all the men and women of our world, to advance together towards an ever wider ‘we.’”*

He appealed *“to journey together towards an ever wider “we” to all men and women, for the sake of renewing the human family, building together a future of justice and peace, and ensuring that no one is left behind. Our societies will have a “colorful” future, enriched by diversity and by cultural exchanges. Consequently, we must even now learn to live together in harmony and peace.”* *“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.” (Rev 21:3).* Let us not forget, that we are all pilgrims in this world and continue to journey ‘together’ towards the promise land, our heavenly homeland.

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Prayer

Holy beloved Father, your Son Jesus taught us that there is great rejoicing in heaven whenever someone lost is found, whenever someone excluded, rejected or discarded is gathered into our “we”, which thus becomes ever wider. We ask you to grant the followers of Jesus, and all people of good will, the grace to do your will on earth. Bless each act of welcome and outreach that draws those in exile into the “we” of community and of the Church, so that our earth may truly become what you yourself created it to be: the common home of all our brothers and sisters.

Amen.

*-Rome, Saint John Lateran, 3 May 2021
Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles*



Names from left to right: Janet Jeyapaul, Ellen Leonard, Eleanor D'Souza, Odilia D'Souza, Nicole Coutinho, Sister Noemia, Veera Pereira

Immigration Canada (IRCC) Increases Sponsorship Financial Liabilities

Effective: January 1, 2022

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) has increased its income support levels in order to ensure RAP continues to align basic monthly income support amounts with provincial social assistance rates and that RAP rates continue to respond to financial needs of resettled refugees.

These changes have already come into effect for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and Blended Visa Office-Referrred (BVOR) Refugees receiving RAP income support. The changes will further come into effect for privately sponsored cases, on January 1st, 2022. ORAT will update its financial liability table once IRCC provides us with the details of this increase. The increase can be summarized as follows:

- Increase to RAP core rates (basic and shelter) to bring them up to parity with provincial social assistance rates, including for senior allowances where applicable;
- Increase to the monthly communication allowance from \$30/month to \$75/month to support access to virtual services;
- Standardizing the age of majority for RAP program at 18 in all provinces; and
- Standardizing transportation rates across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

IRCC Resumes Monitoring of Settlements

Immigration Canada (IRCC) has just announced that it will resume regular monitoring of sponsored newcomers. Monitoring is set to begin in November 2021.

The monitoring process is expected to be done through email surveys and telephone calls (with translators). The reason for this monitoring is to determine, if cosponsors/CGs are providing their sponsored refugee(s) the required level of financial and non-financial support, including registration with a settlement agency (e.g., Catholic Cross-Cultural Services (CCS), YMCA, etc.), and access to settlement services provided by the agency.

We are reminding cosponsors and CGs (Constituent Groups) whose sponsored refugee(s) are currently in their settlement period to frequently review their settlement plan, ensuring that they are providing the required settlement supports to their sponsored refugee.

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Cosponsors and CGs are asked to retain all documents that prove that they have helped the newcomer access or obtain:

- A settlement agency (i.e., name and address of the settlement agency, name of settlement officer), and related services (e.g., ESL/LINK registration, etc.),
- Necessary health/entitlement programs (e.g., OHIP, IFH, Canada Child Benefit, etc.)
- Key documents (e.g., SIN, PR Card, etc.)
- Important settlement supports (e.g., Library Card, Family Doctor, Dentist, Rental/Lease Agreement, Bank Account, etc.).



We remind all stakeholders of the seriousness of this monitoring process and the implications to all involved parties if IRCC determines that insufficient support has been provided to the newcomer.

While we encourage newcomers to cooperate with IRCC's monitoring efforts, we also remind newcomers of the freedom they have as a Permanent Resident to decline to participate. Their participation is voluntary and there is no consequence for declining to participate.

IRCC has indicated that they will initially send out an online survey, which will be followed up with a telephone survey if the newcomer has not responded to the online survey.

If a newcomer chooses to participate in the on-line survey or telephone interview, we ask that they keep a record of their answers to the survey questions from the interview.

The successful resettlement of refugees in Canada continues to be of most importance to us. We encourage anyone with concerns about the level of support provided to refugees to immediately contact ORAT. We can be reached by phone at (647) 494-5419 ext.2 or by email at oratoutreach@archtoronto.org.

Questions & Answers

Source RSTP Bulletin October 08, 2021

Q. What is local integration?

A. Local integration is one of the three durable solutions for refugees. It involves the long-term settlement of a refugee in the country of asylum and the legal, social and economic integration of the refugee in that country.

Refugees may be locally integrated if they have similar rights and opportunities given to the citizens of that country, such as:

- Freedom of movement;
- Protection from refoulement (i.e., return to a country where they are at risk of persecution); and,
- The right to work, access public healthcare and social services, and send their children to school.

Local integration can either be legal or de facto (i.e., the conditions in the country enable refugees to have access to rights and opportunities, but they are not necessarily given to them by law).

If refugees have rights and opportunities in the country of asylum but widespread discrimination prevent real access and enjoyment, then local integration may not have occurred.

Changes to the Immigration Loans Program

IRCC has recently announced changes to the Immigration Loans Program. The changes have come into effect on September 1, 2021.



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The program changes are as follows:

- The immigration loan cap per family will be raised to \$15,000, from \$10,000; and,
- The service fee that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) applies to support the movement of refugees will increase from \$240 to \$300 per person.

These increases will ensure that the IOM can continue to deliver timely, quality services to refugees resettling to Canada. The IOM plays an essential role in helping Canada welcome refugees as the organization assists with pre-departure resettlement processing and provides direct assistance to refugees to travel to Canada, including securing exit permits, coordinating transportation to the airport, booking flights and providing assistance during transit.

It is anticipated that the increase to the immigration loan cap will affect a limited number of refugees, as historically only 3% of loans for resettled refugees exceeded the former cap of \$10,000.



Resettled refugees facing hardships in repaying their loan can ask for a review to adjust their repayment arrangements. The loan is an agreement between IRCC and resettled refugees, and sponsoring groups are not responsible for covering the costs of the refugee's immigration loan.

Education Updates

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ORAT has moved all of its information sessions to an on-line webinar platform. Until further notice, the office will not be holding any in person information sessions.

A webinar is an on-line virtual event. It is an educational or instructive session that includes audio and visual communication between a speaker and attendees.

The initial registration will continue to be done through ORAT's Eventbrite. Registered attendees will receive a confirmation link 48 hours before the webinar begins.

ORAT Website

Please visit ORAT's website to find details about our mandate, goals, and policies, as well as to obtain immigration forms and info session materials. <http://www.orat.ca>

Your input is welcome

If you would like to contribute an article to ORAT's newsletter, have any feedback on past articles, or have suggestions for future articles, please email us at: orateducator@archtoronto.org

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