



105th World Day of Migrants & Refugees

Sunday, September 29, 2019 marked the 105th World Day of Migrants & Refugees, a day dedicated by the Catholic Church to remember and pray for those who suffer as migrants and refugees. The theme announced by His Holiness Pope Francis for this year’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees is “It is not just about migrants”. In his message, Pope Francis reminds us that “every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age. The Lord entrusts to the Church’s motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience... This is a great responsibility, which the church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will...”

In the Archdiocese of Toronto, this day was commemorated with a Solemn Mass, which took place at St. Philip Neri Catholic Church in North York. Archbishop Emeritus of Lahore Pakistan, Lawrence Saldanha presided, with Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick, Auxiliary Bishop of Toronto, and a large number of clergy concelebrating. In his homily, Bishop Kirkpatrick spoke on the Gospel parable of Lazarus and the rich man, and on Pope Francis’ message for this day. He exhorted the faithful to continue their work to care for and protect those who suffer as migrants and refugees.



The presentation that immediately followed the Mass, focused on the suffering of the Pakistani Christian refugee community, many of whom have fled to Thailand, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. A video that was created specifically for this event was presented to the roughly 250 people in attendance. The video and accompanying presentation by Archbishop Saldanha underscored the suffering of this community and the various factors driving the oftentimes brutal persecution of Christians and other

religious minorities in Pakistan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis, Conservative MP for the riding of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan,



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Archbishop Emeritus
Lawrence Saldanha



Mr. Garnett Genuis
Conservative MP

shared the Conservative Party's vision for Refugee Sponsorship, and in particular the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

Deacon Rudy Ovcjak, Director of the Office for Refugees at the Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT) highlighted the work being done by the office to address the plight of the roughly 400 Pakistani Christian refugee families stranded in Thailand. In July, a small team from the office travelled to Bangkok to meet with 65 Pakistani Christian families, both Catholic and Protestant. His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Collins, the Archbishop of Toronto, set aside \$250,000 to assist with the cost of resettling some of these families to Canada. An additional \$250,000 is expected to be contributed by Catholic parishes throughout the Archdiocese. The combined funds will support the sponsorship of 18 of the 65 families.

Work is underway to reach out to Catholic bishops and sponsoring organizations across Canada, to ask for their assistance to sponsor the remaining families. To date, eight Catholic Dioceses have indicated their willingness to sponsor one or more families.

These include the Dioceses of: Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Peterborough, Halifax and others. Efforts are also underway to reach out to Protestant communities and to potential donors to ask for their assistance.

The event marked an important milestone on the way to saving these 400 desperate and suffering Pakistani Christian families.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family or in contributing towards this cause, please contact the Office for Refugees at (416) 934-3400 x804 or by email at

oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org.



Deacon Rudy Ovcjak
Director of ORAT



Two Birthdays in Six Weeks

Opportun Dokawane Zaofi III, originally from Central African Republic (C.A.R), arrived in Toronto from Ghana on July 23, 2019. He has marked that day as his day of rebirth. Everything since then has been a new experience. The drive across the city to Unionville was thrilling because he had never travelled on a highway before.

In his basement apartment, all appliances were carefully explained to him.

Clothes would now be washed and dried in machines, and in his words, "cooking is without charcoal, just electric devices". It took several restless nights to become accustomed to having a bed and a pillow to sleep on.

Opportun went out to explore his new neighbourhood. He waited at a busy traffic intersection for fifteen minutes or more for the traffic light to change. A young child arrived, "pressed a button, and the light changed! Wow!" At Tim Horton's, he ordered a tea, "then they proceeded with a lot of questions: Which tea would you like? What would you like in your tea? ... Compared to Africa, you just said you want tea then you received tea with everything. Soon after arriving, Opportun eagerly began working at a manufacturing company. He says he has been "learning so many new things every day," and he does so enthusiastically.

Aside from his duties at work, Opportun has learned that "timing in Canada is very important. Everything is on a schedule". He also observes that money is only on a card, not cash.

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Two Birthdays in Six Weeks

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Opportun has been happily discovering new foods with his sponsors: Trinidadian food, Indian food, Italian food, yogurt, and steamed broccoli. He loves them all!

There were times in Africa, when he was fleeing war, that four days would go by without food. Once, when companions cooked a stolen chicken, Opportun did not partake because stealing is wrong. Notably, his first meal upon arriving in Canada was Swiss Chalet chicken.

On September 1, 2019, his 27th birthday, Opportun was “deeply touched” by a surprise celebration. It was “the first time in my life to have a big cake and people singing ‘Happy Birthday’ so sweetly. I will never forget this special day!” Nor will he forget that after the singing, birthday candles are blown out. It has been two months since Opportun began his new life in Canada. He has been a source of inspiration to his sponsors, always joyful, ever grateful, and filled with wonder and awe. He sometimes muses over why his life had to be so difficult--- he was separated by war from his beloved parents and seven siblings---where they are, alive or dead, remains a mystery. And yet Opportun is the epitome of hope. He holds no grudges and harbours no hate.

Always eager to learn, and to work, always willing to lend a hand, always with a beaming smile on his face, Opportun is a young man with a promising future. Please God!

The CG of St Justin, Martyr Parish Unionville, ON



Names left to right: Naz Perta, Christine Abela, Opportun, Vicky Ton,

Changes to the RAP Rate

Family Size	Estimated Liability for Cases Submitted in 2020 (Expected 2022 Arrival)	
1	\$18,300	Financial Deposit: For cases that have dependent children 16 years of age or older but under the age of 22 at the time of submission to IRCC, each dependent child will be treated as an individual rather than as part of a family unit. \$18,300 is required for each dependent child. Please adjust the financial requirement for the <u>remaining</u> members of the family accordingly.
2	\$27,500	
3	\$29,600	
4	\$31,800	
5	\$34,000	
6	\$35,500	
7 or more, for each additional member, add	\$1,500	Immigration Forms: Any family with dependent children 16 years of age or older but under the age of 22 will be treated as one case.

Please note that the ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has recently updated the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) rates for Ontario. They have also updated the rates for Alberta and British Columbia. These new rates take effect November 1, 2019.

While these changes are minor in nature, it is important that all those involved in refugee sponsorship are aware of them and are ensuring that the financial support provided to newcomers is in keeping with the new rates. The Office for Refugees has updated its Budget Workbook to reflect the rate changes. The Budget Workbook, which can be found on the Office for Refugees website at <https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/Pages/Forms-2.aspx>, is intended to provide users with a monthly budget for newcomers across all key expense categories.

Get to Know ORAT Staff

My name is Jean Khabouth and I am the new Administrative Coordinator at the Office for Refugees. Prior to joining the ORAT Team, I had a career in Information Technology as a Tele-Communication Network Analyst. I was the lead of a network support team that was tasked to provide infrastructure support.

My first involvement in Refugee Resettlement took place in 2010 when I served as the translator for the Refugee Committee at my local parish of St. Isaac Jogues in Pickering. When the opportunity to work at ORAT knocked on my door, I knew it was a chance that I was not willing to pass up on. With my Lebanese background and my experience living in Canada for more than 40 years, I am able to offer.

I have both an understanding of the complexities of the Middle East and the capability to assist those in need of a safe place to call home. I've been with ORAT for seven months now and I am happy to be working with a team totally devoted to making a difference when it comes to facilitating the refugee resettlement process.

Arriving in Canada can be a scary experience for a refugee family and ORAT has been effective in assisting them with their integration, making the process less daunting and intimidating.

I am blessed to be part of an organization set up by the Archdiocese of Toronto that is dedicated to spreading compassion and hope to survivors of war and persecution, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

I am looking forward to more years of serving the most vulnerable; the minorities, the children, and the elderly who suffer from persecution, violence and danger.

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in “- Matthew 25:35

Jean Khabouth
Administrative Coordinator
The Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto (ORAT)



On-line Information Sessions Now Available

In response to the large number of requests from Cosponsors and Constituent Group (CG) members for online information sessions, the Office for Refugees is pleased to announce that people can now register and attend the education sessions through online Webinars. This service will allow people to remotely attend sessions and download handouts. It has always been ORAT's mission to educate key stakeholders about the resettlement process and to make it as accessible as possible. Registration for the webinars will be available through Eventbrite at <http://orat.eventbrite.com>.

Please note that ORAT will continue to offer on-site sessions as well.



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