



# A Novena For Refugees

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization with a mission to **accompany, serve, and advocate** on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, that they may **heal, learn, and determine their own future.**

Rooted in deep tradition, the novena is a prayer repeated over 9 days for a specific intention.

We invite you to join us in this novena, guided by scripture and papal messages, for all people experiencing forced displacement.

## DAY 1

"The Lord had said to Abram, 'Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.'" (Gen. 12: 1-3)

**Reflect:** Migrants and refugees often slip through the cracks of our world, leaving them suffering and forgotten. In what ways can we bless the names of migrants and refugees today?

*"The faith we proclaim tonight makes us see God present in all those situations where we think he is absent... He is present in the unwelcomed visitor, often unrecognizable, who walks through our cities and our neighborhoods, who travels on our buses and knocks on our doors. This same faith impels us to make space for a new social imagination, and not to be afraid of experiencing new forms of relationship..."* (Pope Francis, Homily at Holy Mass of the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord Papal Mass, December 24, 2017)



**Prayer:** Oh Lord Jesus, give us the courage to experience new forms of relationship. May we welcome migrants and refugees into our lives. Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

## DAY 2



"Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron at night. He said, "Get up and go away from my people, both you and the people of Israel. Go and worship the Lord, as you have said. Take your flocks and your cattle, as you have said, and go. And pray that good will come to me also." (Exodus 12: 31-33)

**Reflect:** What would it be like to migrate as a nation of people in the Exodus? Imagine yourself on the journey. What do you see, hear, and smell?

*"Displaced people offer us this opportunity to meet the Lord, even though our eyes find it hard to recognize him: his clothing in tatters, his feet dirty, his face disfigured, his body wounded, his tongue unable to speak our language."* (Pope Francis, Message for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020)

**Prayer:** Lord, help us to see the humanity of all people. Give us an imagination which breaks down all barriers of culture and ethnic difference. Banish all racism and xenophobia from our hearts. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

## DAY 3

"Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Hebrews 13: 1-3, 15-16)

**Reflect:** How do people of different cultural and racial backgrounds reveal new truths about God?

*"Even hope, like all good things in this world, has enemies... Hope is the push in the heart of those who leave their home, and sometimes their family and relatives - I am thinking of migrants - to find a better life, with more dignity for themselves and their loved ones... It's also the push in the heart of those who welcome: the desire to encounter, meet, dialogue... hope is the push to share the journey."* (Pope Francis, Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2017)

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, inspire us with the gift of hope. Help us to always look towards life with optimism, especially when we encounter people who look different than we do. We pray for the conversion of hearts, that all may see migrants and refugees as angels. Amen.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...



## DAY 4



"Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (Psalm 91:1-2)

**Reflect:** What does it mean to take "refuge" in the Lord?

*"Where migrants and refugees are concerned, the Church and her various agencies ought to avoid offering charitable services alone; they are also called to promote real integration in a society where all are active members and responsible for one another's welfare, generously offering a creative contribution and rightfully sharing in the same rights and duties. Emigrants bring with them a sense of trust and hope which has inspired and sustained their search for better opportunities in life..."*

*Indeed, migrants trust that they will encounter acceptance, solidarity and help, that they will meet people who sympathize with the distress and tragedy experienced by others, recognize the values and resources the latter have to offer, and are open to sharing humanly and materially with the needy and disadvantaged."* (Pope Benedict XVI, message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2013))

**Prayer:** Lord, grant us the courage to stand in solidarity with migrants and refugees. Help them find physical refuge just as you grant each your spiritual refuge. Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

## DAY 5

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 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, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me [...] Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:34-36, 40)

**Reflect:** Our salvation depends upon how we act to alleviate the suffering of the poor and marginalized in the world. In what ways do you do this? In what ways can you improve?

*"Displaced people offer us this opportunity to meet the Lord, 'even though our eyes find it hard to recognize him: his clothing in tatters, his feet dirty, his face disfigured, his body wounded, his tongue unable to speak our language' (Homily, 15 February 2019). We are called to respond to this pastoral challenge with the four verbs I indicated in my Message for this Day in 2018: welcome, protect, promote and integrate."* (Pope Francis, World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020)

**Prayer:** Lord open our eyes to see Your face in the faces of the poor and suffering. Give us the strength to serve all who are in need. Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

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visit [www.JRSUSA/TAKE-ACTION/PRAY.org](http://www.JRSUSA/TAKE-ACTION/PRAY.org) to learn more



## DAY 6



"Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)

**Reflect:** In what ways do we place burdens on foreigners? In what ways can we help to alleviate those burdens?

*"Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more."*  
(Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)).

**Prayer:** Lord, give us the gift of empathy, to feel some of what migrants and refugees feel. Let us never treat migrants and refugees as utilities but as people. Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

## DAY 7

"For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt." (Deuteronomy 10: 17-19)

**Reflect:** How do you show partiality in your life? Who do you place before the poor, the orphan, and the immigrant? How is it that God shows no partiality?

*"This is the mission of the Church and of every baptized person in our time too, even in the era of globalization; a mission that with attentive pastoral solicitude is also directed to the variegated universe of migrants - students far from home, immigrants, refugees, displaced people, evacuees - including for example, the victims of modern forms of slavery, and of human trafficking. Today too the message of salvation must be presented with the same approach as that of the Apostle to the Gentiles, taking into account the different social and cultural situations and special difficulties of each one as a consequence of his or her condition as a migrant or itinerant person."* (Pope Benedict XVI, 95th World Day of Migrants and Refugees)



**Prayer:** Lord God, give us the eyes of equality. Help us to see the inherent dignity in each person we meet. Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

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## DAY 8



"Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous." (Deuteronomy 26:5)

**Reflect:** How are you related to immigrants? How far back in your own ancestry do you have to go to find one? What is their story?

*"Fears and prejudices – all too many prejudices – keep us distant from others and often prevent us from "becoming neighbours" to them and serving them with love. Drawing close to others often means being willing to take risks, as so many doctors and nurses have taught us in recent months. This readiness to draw near and serve goes beyond a mere sense of duty."* (Pope Francis, Message for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020).

**Prayer:** Lord God, the migrant identity touches all humanity. May we see our own histories in theirs and recognize how they uniquely bring your presence to us.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

## DAY 9

"Jesus said to them, [...] 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.' And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight." (Acts 1:8-11)

**Reflect:** Jesus, our God who lived a life of itinerant ministry, migrates from earth to heaven in the Ascension. What does it mean that our lives culminate in crossing a border between this world and another?

*"Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who flee death from war and hunger, and who have begun a journey moved by hope for survival, the Gospel calls us to be 'neighbours' of the smallest and the abandoned, and to give them concrete hope. It's not enough to say, 'Take heart. Be patient'.... Christian hope has a fighting spirit, with the tenacity of one who goes toward a sure goal. Therefore, as the Jubilee of Mercy approaches, I make an appeal to parishes, religious communities, monasteries and shrines throughout Europe, that they express the Gospel in a concrete way and host a refugee family."* (Pope Francis, Angelus, September 6, 2015)



**Prayer:** Lord, give us the gift of generosity, that we may make the choice to have less so that others may have more. May we never "count the cost". Amen.  
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be...

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## FINAL PRAYER



*God of all,  
As we move forward from the familiar comfort of home,  
whether we are a refugee on the road  
Or a companion to our displaced siblings, may we be aware  
Of what gives movement to our steps: love.  
May we take that love and carry it forth, beyond borders  
So we may accompany, serve, and advocate  
On behalf of all displaced people  
And sustain the mission through the years to come  
As long as there are people on this earth seeking refuge  
and protection.  
On this journey, if we ever feel overwhelmed by the injustice  
of displacement, may we remember  
To act as if we only possess your love and your grace, for  
that is all we need,  
As you hold us in your hands.  
Amen.*