

# SUNDAY PLUS

## Work for justice



By Eileen Cole

During Advent and Christmastide, we are asked to pray for particular intentions, one of these being migrants and refugees. In England and Wales, today is Migrants' Day. During Advent it's easy to imagine the Holy Family making their way from the north of Israel, down south to Bethlehem and then, soon afterwards, needing to flee to safety in another country, leaving with haste at night, into Egypt.

It is amazing that God has condescended so much to our human condition, to so completely experience what might befall any of us, depending on our circumstances. And here is the Son of God just made incarnate, just recently born, needing to flee persecution.

Nobody chooses to be a refugee or migrant. It is a question of need; need for safety, for food, for shelter. In some cases, it is also to improve the lot

of their family and provide a better future for their children, which is the right of every parent.

The Bishops' Conference published *Love the Stranger* last March, a beautiful explanation of how a Christian should respond to those seeking sanctuary and who ask for asylum. In the words of Cardinal Nichols: "*Love the Stranger* draws together more than one hundred years of Catholic teaching to guide our response to migration in England and Wales today. While it does not propose detailed solutions to complex problems, it clearly calls for procedures which permit safe and controlled access and a fair hearing to those seeking asylum. Present arrangements in this country are dramatically lacking in both of these requirements."

*Eileen Cole is the Communications Manager for Jesuit Refugee Service UK: [www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net) | @JRSUK | facebook.com/jesuitrefugeeserviceuk*

[Jesus] suffers when he sees in our own day and in many parts of the world, ways of exercising power that feed on oppression and violence, seeking to expand their own space by restricting that of others, imposing their own domination and restricting basic freedoms, and in this way oppressing the weak.

Pope Francis

## Justice begins at home – setting a good example

By Natalie Claviera

As we begin our Advent journey, let us try and think of the many ways we can "Be on guard! Be alert!" to fulfil our Christian duty. Yes, we all often try to be shining examples all year round, but it's not easy to prepare ourselves perennially, especially when we don't always know when we are truly "needed". However, if we always remain open, to give and receive love in equal measure, we are always setting the right example. Most importantly to ourselves, but also in the eyes of our all-loving, all-guiding God. Let us be alert to hear the Good News and share our insight and faith with those around us, especially those that look to us for guidance and reassurance.

*Natalie Claviera is the Head of Sales, Distribution & Customer Experience for Redemptorist Publications.*

Feast of the week

Friday 8 December

## The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

You are all-beautiful, O Mary!  
In you there is no sin.

Awaken in all of us a renewed desire for holiness:  
May the splendour of truth shine forth in our words,  
the song of charity resound in our works,  
purity and chastity abide in our hearts and bodies,  
and the full beauty of the Gospel be evident in our lives.

You are all-beautiful, O Mary!  
In you the Word of God became flesh.

Help us always to heed the Lord's voice:  
May we never be indifferent to the cry of the poor,  
or untouched by the sufferings of the sick and those in need;  
may we be sensitive to the loneliness of the elderly and the vulnerability of children,  
and always love and cherish the life of every human being.

You are all-beautiful, O Mary!  
In you is the fullness of joy born of life with God.

Help us never to forget the meaning of our earthly journey:  
May the kindly light of faith illumine our days,  
the comforting power of hope direct our steps,  
the contagious warmth of love stir our hearts;  
and may our gaze be fixed on God, in whom true joy is found.

Pope Francis

Today:  
Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:33-37

Monday:  
Isaiah 2:1-5  
Matthew 8:5-11

Tuesday:  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Luke 10:21-24

Wednesday:  
Isaiah 25:6-10  
Matthew 15:29-37

Thursday:  
Isaiah 26:1-6  
Matthew 7:21. 24-27

Friday:  
Genesis 3:9-15. 20  
Ephesians 1:3-6. 11-12  
Luke 1:26-38

Saturday:  
Isaiah 30:19-21. 23-26  
Matthew 9:35 – 10:1. 6-8

Next Sunday:  
Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11  
2 Peter 3:8-14  
Mark 1:1-8