

June 20, 2018

CARITAS PROMOTES WEEK OF SHARING WITH REFUGEES

In our world today where an unprecedented 68.5 million people have been forced from home – among them, nearly 25.4 million refugees¹, Caritas Australia, the Catholic Agency for International Aid and Development, has joined Pope Francis' call to #sharethejourney, to promote the rights and the protection of refugees and migrants.

This week Caritas Australia, as part of the Caritas Internationalis network, is calling for people to speak with a refugee or migrant to learn more about their experiences as part of the campaign.

The Global Week of Action which ends on June 24, coincides with the annual Refugee Week celebrations in Australia.

The Share the Journey campaign was launched in September last year by Pope Francis and seeks to encourage a culture of encounter and support, with and for, refugees and migrants.

“We invite you to sit down together with migrants and refugees living in your community, to listen to their stories and to share your own,” said Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, president of Caritas Internationalis.

The Global Week of Action comes as more than a million Rohingya refugees continue to shelter in makeshift camps across South- West Bangladesh.

Those affected include children, the elderly and people needing medical care as well as pregnant women and new mothers.

For 18- year-old Fatema, living as a refugee in Bangladesh has been difficult. Fatema is a widow. Her husband was killed in 2017 and their house burned down in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

“Sometimes we go to bed hungry. We got some dry rice but we have no vegetables and no cooking utensils,” she said.

Since the onset of the crisis, Caritas Australia has been working in coordination with the Bangladeshi government and other partner organisations including Caritas Bangladesh to deliver food and utensils to more than 60,000 Rohingya refugees.

To learn more about the Global Week of Action including how to organize a shared meal with refugees and migrants visit: <http://journey.caritas.org/gwa18/>

A series resources designed for schools including prayers and a guide to holding “a refugee simulation” activity visit: <https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/schools>

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¹ Figures according to UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/en-au/figures-at-a-glance.html>, accessed 20/6/2018