

FORCED DISPLACEMENT

Annual Theme 2019





Who we are

The Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA) is a Vincentian Family initiative supporting established and emerging homelessness initiatives across the globe. We understand homelessness as those living on the street, refugees and those displaced from their home, and slum dwellers in inadequate housing.

Our vision

Everyone has a place to call home and a stake in their community.

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Cover: UK Department for International Development, 2012.

Page 2: Georgios Giannopoulos, 2015.

Page 6: World Bank, 2014.

page 7: British Museum 2015.

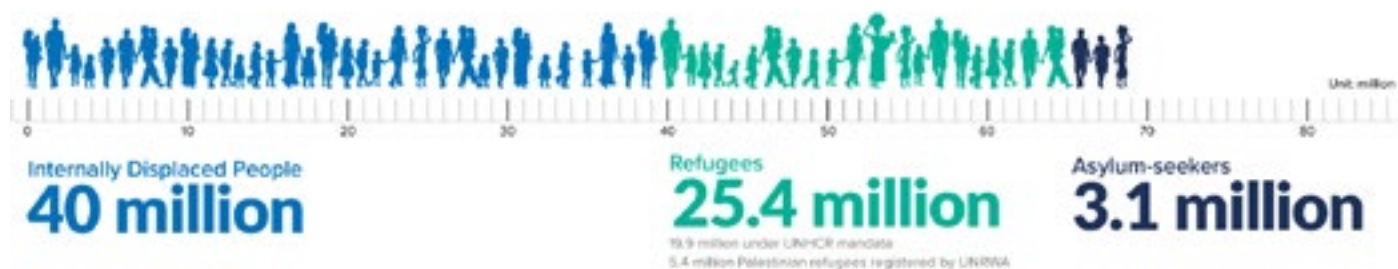
Back cover: Marienna Pope-Weidemann 2015.



The Vincentian Family’s Annual Theme for reflection 2019 is Forced Displacement. We encourage you to reflect, pray and continue to serve our brothers and sisters who find themselves having to flee their home for reasons of war, persecution and natural disaster. We hope

this resource, produced by the Famvin Homeless Alliance (FHA) allows you to do so. Below are some key statistics about forced displacement produced by the United Nations. You can also read [our briefing paper on forced displacement](#) to find out more about the subject.

68.5 million forcibly displaced people worldwide



Where the world’s displaced people are being hosted

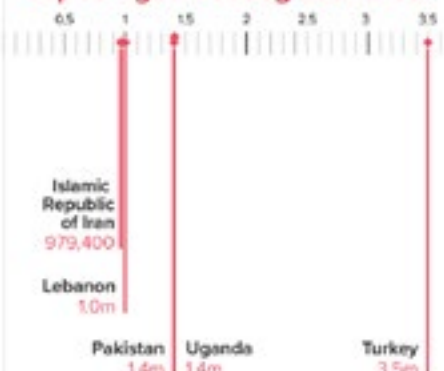


85 per cent of the world’s displaced people are in developing countries

57% of refugees worldwide came from three countries



Top refugee-hosting countries



10 million stateless people

102,800 Refugees resettled

44,400 people a day forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution

16,765 personnel
UNHCR employs 16,765 people worldwide (as of 30 November 2018)

138 countries
We work in 138 countries (as of 30 November 2018)

We are funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions, with 87 per cent from governments and the European Union and 10 per cent from private donors

Scripture and Forced Displacement



The Flight into Egypt, Giotto di Bondone, 1304 - 1306

The Bible frequently references the plight of displaced people:

1. The Exodus

The enslavement of the early Jewish peoples and their liberation out of Egypt to Mount Sinai is captured in the early books through Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy 10:19, Moses tells the Israelites: ‘And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.’

2. Matthew 2:13-23

The flight of Mary and Joseph from King Herod reminds us that even as He entered the world, Christ Himself was forcibly displaced by the threat of persecution. ‘When they had gone, an angel of the Lord

appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” (Matthew 2:13)

3. Leviticus 19:33-34

‘When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’

4. Matthew 25:34-36

‘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...’

Saint Vincent de Paul and Refugees

St Vincent made welcoming and caring for displaced people a central part of the ministry of the early Vincentian Family. **Fr Robert Maloney**, in [‘Welcoming the Stranger: St Vincent de Paul and the Homeless’](#), describes the work with those fleeing war in Lorraine.

Housing for refugees - Vincent’s efforts to find lodging and assistance for thousands of displaced men, women and children during the wars in Lorraine.

Beginning in 1639, Vincent began organizing campaigns for the relief of those suffering from war, plague, and famine. This work went on for ten years. During that time, Vincent succeeded in supplying Lorraine with help amounting to more than 60 million dollars and more than 38,000 yards of various fabrics. He raised funds initially from the Ladies of Charity and eventually obtained contributions from the highest authorities. King Louis XIII made a gift of \$1,800,000.

One of Vincent’s assistants, Brother Mathieu Regnard, made 53 trips, crossing enemy lines in disguise, carrying money from Vincent for the relief of those in war zones. On his return trip, he often brought with him a number of people whom he had found in dire circumstances. In October 1639, Vincent wrote of him, “He brought in a hundred last month, among whom were forty-six young women ... He fed them and accompanied them right into this city where the greater number have already been placed.”

Vincent demanded strict accountability. He insisted that he receive regular reports on how relief money was being spent, so that benefactors would know how their donations were used and would be encouraged to give even more. He wrote to his confrere François du Coudray, “... obtain a receipt for everything they give, because we must keep an account of it so that, whatever the pretext may be, not a speck of it is diverted or applied elsewhere. And please send me by way of Brother Mathieu a copy of the accounts, signed by M. de Villarceaux, and a copy of his orders, if there is one. Also send me every month the amounts you have given out or ordered to be distributed in other places.”

As he did throughout his life, Vincent told the members of his family that they should not only offer material help, but also provide spiritual assistance to those who were fleeing to the towns and cities. In a letter written on Oct. 12, 1639, after describing the displacement of the population in Lorraine and the material help that was being provided, he stated: “We are assisting them spiritually by teaching them everything necessary for salvation. We have them begin by making a general confession of their entire past life and then continue to confess every two or three months.”

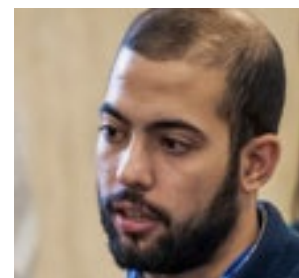
Reflecting on Vincent’s accomplishments in Lorraine, the historian Bernard Pujos concluded: “This support for Lorraine is remarkable for more than the amount of aid distributed and the number of suffering people helped. It was the first attempt at organized assistance for a whole endangered region. Without having received any specific charge, Vincent de Paul assumed the role of a secretary of state for refugees and war victims. Going far beyond the responsibilities expected of him as superior of the Congregation of the Mission, he placed himself, on his own initiative, in a national role.”



Saint Vincent de Paul

“In each person we met, God was waiting for us”

Rodolph Haddad (right) is one of the FHA's ambassadors. He is a member of the Missionary Group of Charity in Lebanon, a Vincentian group that ministers to Syrian refugees. Since the beginning of the war, around 1.5 million Syrian refugees have ended up in Lebanon, now accounting for a quarter of the country's population. The Missionary Group offers essential supplies and links refugees to support available from other NGOs. Rodolph explains how his faith informs his ministry, based on the Vincentian principle of personal contact with the poor.



Five years ago, when the Missionary Group of Charity started its mission it was solely directed towards the poorest and how we can find the image of Christ in our fellows, the poor. Five years later we grew to learn that, with love, great stuff can be accomplished and this is how we travelled into our fifth year, when we started to work closely with Syrian refugees all around Lebanon.

Syrian refugees have been distributed in camps across Lebanon, and this year we decided to work within a big camp located in Beqaa, a region where hundreds of thousands of refugees are residing. The camp we minister to has more than 800 people located in tents. Throughout the year, and through our preparation as a committee, we got the chance to visit the camp many times and determine their needs – which are not always financial.

This camp along with many others faced a lot during the winter season. The camp flooded, and some of the few belongings the refugees possessed were destroyed. Disease also increased so we weren't aware of what might occur. In the face of all this, we knew that our one Vincentian group was not going to change the

world or accomplish majesty stuff, but could still serve those poor in the camp. That is also why we tried to connect with other charity groups, both local ones located next to the camp and to another group in the Vincentian Family, as we realised that such a great crisis will require any help available.

It took us around 5 months of preparation to begin our ministry proper, ensuring we had enough supplies, food, materials. We prepared activities for women, kids and men.

In each person we met, God was waiting for us, welcoming us and teaching us how to serve Him humbly. In the context of such a vast crisis, we completed only a little. But it was a lesson for us: we learned that living the life of a missionary is not enclosed in space or time. We are invited to live as a missionary in our daily life, but it is choice that each one of us needs to make. As for the Missionary Group of Charity, next year we have new plans and projects to serve Syrian refugees, knowing that even before we begin our ministry God is waiting for us, planning to meet us in each person we encounter.



Pope Francis on Refugees

The Holy Father has spoken often during his Papacy on the plight of refugees and migrants. In particular, he has highlighted the displacement of refugees attempting to cross to Europe. In 2013 he visited the island of Lampedusa, where many refugees are sheltering having made the journey across the Mediterranean Sea. Reflecting on this perilous journey, [Pope Francis gave a homily at a refugee camp in Lampedusa](#):

“Where is your brother?” His blood cries out to me, says the Lord. This is not a question directed to others; it is a question directed to me, to you, to each of us. These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God!

Pope Francis has encouraged a ‘culture of encounter’ as an antidote to the ‘globalisation of indifference’ he

says pervades the world’s response to humanitarian tragedies. In January 2018, [on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#), he repeated his call for a compassionate Catholic response.

“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 (Matthew 25:35-43). 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 – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will...

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that “our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate”.




The Lampedusa Cross

The wood is taken from the wreckage of boats carrying refugees crossing the Mediterranean sea to Europe. A local carpenter Francesco Tuccio made one cross to represent each of the 311 Eritrean and Somali refugees who drowned on one boat trying to cross from Libya to Europe in October 2013.



Questions for reflection

- How can we learn from St Vincent’s work with displaced people?
- How does the Bible encourage us to treat refugees and ‘strangers’?
- How can we foster a ‘culture of encounter’ in our communities?



Prayer for refugees

Lord, you instruct us to welcome the stranger. In your kindness, watch over refugees and those displaced, those separated from their loved ones and their homes.

Grant us the compassion to show your kindness to strangers and to all in need. May we offer a welcoming embrace and create a new home for those without one. May we show this to all our neighbors, regardless of creed or color.

Grant this, we pray, through Christ our Lord.

Famvin Homeless Alliance