

**УКРАЇНСЬКА
КАТОЛИЦЬКА ЄПАРХІЯ
ПРЕСВЯТОЇ РОДИНИ
В ЛОНДОНІ**



**UKRAINIAN
CATHOLIC EPARCHY
OF THE HOLY FAMILY
OF LONDON**

**PASTORAL LETTER
FOR THE 106TH WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
27 September 2020**

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, and Lay Faithful of the
Eparchy of the Holy Family of London

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ!

Each year Catholics across the globe are invited to remember migrants and refugees in a special way. This year, for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees which falls on Sunday September 27, Pope Francis has chosen the theme “Forced Like Jesus Christ to Flee” and is asking us to focus on the pastoral care of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The very foundation of our Church in the United Kingdom is the result of the migration of our Ukrainian refugees arriving after World War II. The men and women who found themselves in our country often brought with them very little in the way of possessions. Like our recent waves of immigrants from Ukraine they often had to leave behind what little they may have owned. But what they brought with them was more precious than material things. They brought their faith in God and dedication to the Church.

This year’s theme speaks to us in a special way. Our Cathedral was originally called the Holy Family in Exile. This title recalled the plight of Our Lord Jesus, of Mary, his mother, and Joseph, her spouse, who fled their home in Palestine to Egypt. We do not know how difficult their life was in Egypt, who helped them and the struggles they faced because there is nothing written in our Sacred Scriptures about that period of our Lord’s life. We can surely identify with them either because we ourselves are immigrants or refugees, are the children or grandchildren of immigrants, or have close relationships with those who have arrived at the British shores.

His Holiness Pope Francis in his Message for this commemorative day asks us to reflect on “the drama of internally displaced persons, an often-unseen tragedy that the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated.” Our beloved Ukraine has witnessed the internal displacement of more than one million people as a direct result of the annexation of Crimea, and the war being waged by Russia in the Donbas. We want to remember in our prayers today our sisters and brothers in Ukraine who have lost their homes and possessions, and continue to need assistance to care for themselves and their loved ones. In our prayers we also remember in particular all those in Ukraine and abroad who are helping internally displaced persons.

Here in the United Kingdom, all over Europe and, indeed, around the world we are now entering the eighth month of Covid-19 quarantine and lock-down restrictions. This global pandemic has meant that many of us have become, in a sense, displaced from normal social interaction, in our very own homes. However, in the midst of the challenges we face, we continue to receive many blessings and graces from our Lord. But the suffering of those who do not even have a home is far more difficult. This Sunday is also the Feast of the Exaltation of the Life-Giving and Holy Cross and so as we offer up the crosses we bear to the Lord in prayer, let us reflect on how we might be of greater assistance to those, whose plight is far worse than ours, whose needs far exceed our own. As the Apostle of the Nations, St. Paul reminds us: “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:4).

I continue to place each of you under the protection of the Holy Family, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary, and the holy and righteous St. Joseph the Betrothed.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you!

+ Kenneth

+Kenneth
Eparchial Bishop