

Dear Friends

The 3,000 Refugees & Migrants at Calais – our response

Last week Sally Magnusson, the Songs of Praise presenter, asked a church volunteer in the midst of the Calais camp, “Why are you helping these people?” The volunteer’s reply was so simple and so true: “Because it is what the church is for,” she said, “to help the lost, the hopeless, the refugees.”

This echoes Pope Francis’ first visit outside Rome, in July 2013, to the little island of Lampedusa where many refugees land. In a powerful sermon he asked us to reflect on the question, **"Where is your brother, your sister?"**

The Pope said, **"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 are trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they are looking for a better place for themselves and their families ... How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God! How much these people have suffered! Some of them never made it here."**

Inside the newsletter you will see the urgent needs of 3,000 of our sisters and brothers, in Calais – just 80 miles from here. Please help in any way that you can.

Field of Dreams – Praise for our young leaders

In the last fortnight 38 of our 16-25 year olds have given about 80 hours each of volunteer time, energy, joy, talent and gift. That is 3,040 volunteer hours to help 120 children have a week packed full of summer fun. From Olympic hurdles to circle football, softball, jewellery boxes, fishing, golf, roller skating, the Great Basildon Bake Off, plus a lemur, a baby crocodile, a bird eating spider and so much more, it has been a truly superb fortnight. **Thank you** to parishioners for the many quiet donations to help us along. **Above all, without the dedication, care, kindness and exuberance of our young adults, it would not happen; we thank God for them and pray for each of them as their new term begins.**

Fr Dominic