

Praying for the Migration Crisis

Dear Praying Friends,

Welcome to Prayer Bulletin no 1 of the Canopy of Prayer for Europe. It struck me recently that as Christians we are always the body of Christ and as such we have a collective responsibility which goes beyond our physical locality. Therefore I ask, can we look at these verses in Matthew as the family of faith for our continent?:

“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.” (Matthew 18:19-20)

When we are together in unity, then Jesus is there with us. Unity does not mean uniformity; we will each have different view of what is right or wrong for our continent. But if our canopy can encourage unity of the purpose in seeking God for our continent, then He will be with us and His will will be done! Sometimes we don't understand what God is doing until later but with hindsight we have a glimpse of God's plan and purpose and the beginning of understanding how to respond to his will.

Blessings,

Ian Jeal

Fleeing for your life

With your home, livelihood, community and even your life at risk, flight to a safe country may appear the only option. Most of us have never had to face this awful situation - laying down everything to escape with our lives.

But we know that our Saviour has; He became a migrant too, urgently taken by His family to save His life.

“..an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, for Herod is going to search for this child to kill him” (Matthew 2:13).

Responding to the angel's alarm call, Joseph packed up his new family, leaving immediately in the middle of the night to escape Herod's murderous plot. So prophecy was fulfilled as God brought his only son out of exile in Egypt.

Compassion for the vulnerable

This week I visited three migrant camps in Greece, witnessing the desperation and hearing stories of migrants needing shelter, hospitality, resources and above all, hope. Europe's strong position gives us a responsibility to welcome genuine refugees. As James points out "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" James 1:27

Pray for the local initiatives that are working hard to show a Christian welcome to all those in need (including Caritas, Samaritan's Purse).

Profiting from their misery

Many are profiting at the expense of the misery of those on the move. People traffickers and smugglers are preying on these migrants- making them victims twice over.

We must pray for the security and police forces who should intercept organised crime gangs, evil individuals getting rich by trapping, transporting and sometimes selling their victims.

I saw railway carriages in Eidomeni which are being used as a brothel, and heard from Christian NGO A21 of women being trafficked out of the camps.

We must pray that swift justice stops their evil trade in human flesh.

Wisdom & discernment

Politicians are struggling how to respond to this latest crisis. European parliament members want to keep migrants out, welcome them in, give them new residency rights, pay other countries to house them, fly them in and fly them out. Billions of Euros are being spent, and yet the solution is not clear.

- Please pray that **compassion and wisdom** can be used in putting together asylum mechanisms that
 - Help those on the move to find shelter and rest
 - Help those not wanting to move to be able to stay in their own country
 - Help discern who are moving for genuine reasons, and the others
 - Fairly involve all European citizens in sharing the responsibility
 - For the EU as they consider revising the existing asylum laws
 - Express a unity in the EU – at a time when this unity is in danger

Other items to pray for:

1. CARE, UK is holding a [conference on the impact of Pornography](#). Please pray that from this can come strong initiatives in education, legislation and ultimately the destruction of this degrading industry
2. [Ashers Bakery](#) beginning their appeal against the county court in Northern Ireland, after refusing to make a cake with the message 'Support Gay Marriage' on it. Christian freedom of expression for all is at risk if this appeal is unsuccessful.
3. **Our national television providers**, who have such a large impact on the minds of Europeans. Pray that their output would turn from being anti-gospel, towards giving the airwaves to words of hope and life.
4. **Ukrainian National Prayer Breakfast** taking place 1-3rd June 2016. As Christian politicians gather they are seeking to form closer links to protect Christian values in Central and Eastern Europe.

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