

World Refugee Day 2009



United Nations interviews Iraqi refugees: Paul Jeffrey photo. Internally displaced persons in Congo (DRC): Photo © MONUC/Marie Frechon. Pictured below - Colombian refugees: Juan Salazar photo.

Often God calls us to help someone when we are in great need ourselves. That certainly was true for the Zarephath widow (I Kings 17). An extended drought and the resulting famine had emptied her cupboard of all but a little oil and a handful of meal.

Imagine her preparing to bake one last little piece of bread for herself and her son. They planned to eat it, then await death by starvation.

Just then, along comes Elijah – hungry and reporting that God had told him she would feed him! The widow describes her own dire situation. Elijah replies, “Do not be afraid. First make me a little cake ... and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.”

By faith, the widow fed Elijah first, and God sustained all of them until the famine ended.

Just as Elijah looked to the widow to save his life, refugees fleeing persecution and violence are looking to us to save their lives.

We must not waiver in our commitment to them, even as the economic recession affects our own homes and communities. We must trust that God will sustain us as we extend mercy to these neighbors in need.



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Invocation

O God, through our worship today may we be drawn closer to you and to each other in a spirit of love and compassion. In this time of reverence, focus our minds and hearts on Christ, whose love knows no boundaries and whose compassion extends to all. Amen.

Prayer

Loving God, hear our prayers for the many people around the world who are struggling for the basic necessities of life.

In this time of hardship for so many, we are especially mindful of refugees forced from their homelands because of who they are or what they believe.

Help us to trust that you will not allow our jug of oil and jar of meal to empty as we seek to be good neighbors to refugees beginning new lives in our nation. Amen.

Scriptures

I Kings 17: 1-16
Luke 10: 25-37

Benediction

Now let us go forth to serve, to welcome and to bless. As Jesus freely poured out his life for us, may we freely share our lives with others. We pray in the name of the all-merciful, ever hospitable Jesus. Amen.



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