



WHY DO YOU LOOK FOR THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

Easter message by Bishop Douglas Crosby, O.M.I.

Bishop of Hamilton and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

As Syrian refugees begin to settle into their new reality of life in Canada, stories of their journeys to this new land all have similar themes. Feeling under siege and faced with an uncertain future in the midst of war, many people were compelled to flee their land, their homes, their work, their education and all that seemed familiar in order to find new life.

We have been shocked by stories of thousands of families walking miles and miles to the borders of other countries to escape the destruction of war. We have heard of their existence in crowded refugee camps awaiting news about whether they would be accepted into other countries. We have been horrified by the suffering of young children separated from one or both of their parents because of brutality and even death.

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” This was the question asked of the women at the tomb that first Easter morning and it is something we must ask ourselves. It is a question that is perplexing because the answer seems obvious. Just as the story of Jesus’ death did not end at the tomb when the women found it empty, so too the story of the Syrian refugees does not end at the borders and in refugee camps. In fact, the story begins anew with the hope of the Resurrection.

The Apostles were skeptical of the news about what the women had discovered at the tomb. We too might question how well the refugee families are doing in their new land. Undoubtedly, they are grieving, having been stripped of the freedom to live in their own homeland and yet we see many signs that they are rebounding and making the best of their new reality.

This Easter, many refugee families are celebrating new life in their new homes. They are cared for and guided by the generosity, love and mercy of the many communities that have marshalled their resources to provide food, shelter and warm clothing for the men, women and children who have finally found a safe place to live among us. The signs of this new life are evident in the children who are playing in nearby parks and being welcomed by friends in their new schools. They are evident in the lives of the adults as they seek to learn a new language and to find meaningful employment. They are evident in the community suppers and special events that have been organized to welcome and support refugee families.

Easter calls us to look for life among the living with grateful and joyful hearts. Easter calls us to move beyond the tomb and share the good news of the Resurrection with one another. Easter calls us to courageously follow Jesus Christ, the risen one, and to boldly proclaim that out of darkness and suffering come new life.

In feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and all the other ways by which we protect human dignity and reverence the sacredness of one another's lives from conception to natural death, we proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus and participate in his saving redemption. We affirm our profound trust in the Father's promise of new life. We join in the proclamation of the Good News of the Resurrection, "*He is not here, but has risen.*"

Happy Easter to you, your family and your loved ones!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglas Crosby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
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