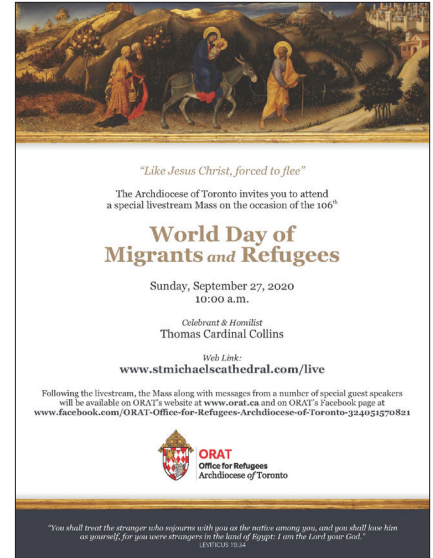




2020 World Day of Migrants & Refugees

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented some unique challenges for society and in the life of the Church. It has also had an affect on our plans for this year's World Day of Migrants & Refugees event. In response to the pandemic, ORAT has arranged for this year's event, which took place on Sunday, September 27, 2020, to be celebrated virtually.

On this occasion, His Eminence, Thomas Cardinal Collins, the Archbishop of Toronto, both celebrated Mass and preached the homily. We also arranged for a number of guest speakers to share a video message. These were posted on our website along with the recording of the Mass, and His Eminence's homily. To view these, simply click on the links below:



Archdiocese of Toronto's Webinar on Persecuted Christians

In preparation for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees, and as part of the "Faith in the Public Square" series, the Archdiocese of Toronto hosted a webinar on Christian Persecution. The webinar took place on Thursday, September 24 at 7:00 PM, and was moderated by Neil McCarthy, Director of Communication for the Archdiocese of Toronto, and included Carl Hetu (Catholic Near East Welfare Association), Marie-Claude Lalonde (Aid to the Church in Need), and Deacon Rudy Ovcjak (Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto) as panelists.

The webinar presented a clear picture of the level of persecution that Christians face in many parts of the world. It is, as Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi, stated "one of the crimes against humanity of our time." To view the entire webinar, simply click on the following link https://youtu.be/vtFXh49Y_s. We encourage to share this link with your friends and family.

The webinar concluded with a call to action.

Here are some ways that you may want to consider that would help. It would mean the world to a persecuted Christian who is waiting to come to Canada if you would write to your Member of Parliament about what you learned during the webinar. [You can find](#)

[contact information for your MP here](#). Discussing your concerns about what you learned in the webinar in your own words would be most effective, but here are some major issues that we discussed in the webinar:

- Christians are the victims of 75 per cent of the world's religiously-motivated violence;
- More than 300 million Christians are being persecuted around the world right now;
- Persecuted Christians are vastly underrepresented among the refugees brought to Canada under the

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Archdiocese of Toronto's Webinar on Persecuted Christians

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Government Assisted Refugee Program, which relies on the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) to assist in the selection process;

- It takes the Canadian government far too long to process privately sponsored refugees, leading to prolonged suffering for refugees and frustration for volunteers here in Canada; and,
- The Canadian government needs to do more to help persecuted Christians whether they live in the Middle East, Pakistan, Nigeria, China or North Korea.

Spending five minutes to write a respectful email to your MP would help our elected representatives in Ottawa take notice of this issue, which is literally a matter of life or death for those living under persecution.

Also, consider volunteering your time as a member of your parish refugee committee. And if your parish does not have a refugee committee, consider speaking with your pastor about creating a refugee committee and sponsoring a refugee family.

2020 Allocation Received

The Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada ("IRCC") normally announces the allocation to each Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) by the end of February of each year. It is the allocation that represents the number of refugees that a SAH can sponsor during that year. Sadly, 2020 proved to be anything but a normal year. SAHs learned of their allocation quite late, only learning of their allocation at the end of July. Several SAHs made the unfortunate decision to delay their work on refugee sponsorship applications until after the allocation was announced. ORAT did not.

In the fall of 2019, we began laying the groundwork for 2020 by reaching out to members of the general public, as well as to parishioners from various Eastern Rite and Orthodox communities, inviting them to attend the "Introduction to Resettlement" Information Session. For these cosponsors, this marked the start of sponsoring a refugee through ORAT.

Fortunately, despite the late announcement of allocations, SAHs were able to submit refugee

sponsorship applications to IRCC beginning in January.

With the groundwork already laid, ORAT was well prepared to begin submitting refugee sponsorship applications to IRCC. We did so, despite being limited to the number of applications that we could submit at any one time.

When the allocation was announced, we were happy to find out that our allocation was significantly higher than that of 2019. Work soon began to fill the remaining spots. We are pleased to announce that all the spots have now been earmarked for specific cases. As we enter the fall of 2020, we are again beginning to lay the groundwork for the coming year. As we write the newsletter, registration has already begun for members of the general public

For cosponsors that we have not been able to assist, we would encourage you to consider alternative options that may be available, such as Group of 5, Community Sponsorship, or other non-refugee immigration avenues. You may also wish to contact other SAHs in your area to see if they are accepting applications for sponsorship.

ORAT's General Public Registration

In preparation for 2021, ORAT launched a program at the end of September for members of the general public, who wished to sponsor their family members who were in need of refugee resettlement. This program was designed to assist those who were not parishioners of Catholic (Latin or Eastern Rite) or Orthodox churches that were located within the Archdiocese of Toronto, and with whom ORAT had an already established program with.

We received an overwhelming response to this program. In total, we received 12,226 registrations. Of these, only 2,798 were valid registrations. Many of the invalid registrations were completed by refugees themselves, or by cosponsors who did not reside within the Archdiocese of Toronto.

Of the 2,798 registration, the majority of these were to sponsor Syrians (52.5%) or Eritreans (38.1%). The following table reports by Country of Origin/Citizenship, the number of cases that were registered, and the number of refugees that the registered cases represented.

Given the limited number of refugees that sponsoring organizations like ORAT are able to sponsor, we are unable to assist many of those who registered. To manage this and to be as fair as possible to registrants, a random draw will be held in the coming weeks.

Following the draw, selected registrants will be invited by email to attend an on-line “Introduction to Resettlement” information session. If we find out in 2021 that we are able to submit additional refugee sponsorship cases to Immigration Canada, then we will go down the draw order and select the next batch of registrants to begin work on their cases.

We thank all those who participated in the registration.

Country of Origin	Number of Cases	Number of Cases as a % of Total	Number of Refugees	Number of Refugees as a % of Total
Syria	1470	52.5%	5,026	58.7%
Eritrea	1,067	38.1%	2,631	30.7%
Iraq	100	3.6%	306	3.6%
Yemen	52	1.9%	190	2.2%
Ethiopia	48	1.7%	136	1.6%
Afghanistan	38	1.4%	199	2.3%
Sudan	19	0.7%	59	0.7%
Pakistan	2	0.1%	9	0.1%
Iran	2	0.1%	3	0.0%
Grand Total	2,798	100%	8,559	100%

Outreach Update

As part of the July, 2020 resumption of refugee travel to Canada, IRCC inserted additional procedural steps prior to the travel of the refugee. This included a “Confirmation of Arrival” notification from IRCC to the cosponsor, CG and SAH. The notification required confirmation from the sponsor that they were able to receive the refugee and that an adequate quarantine plan had been prepared and communicated to the refugee.

Since the resumption of refugee travel to Canada, ORAT has received 28 arrival confirmations, representing 60 refugees. These refugees will arrive from some of the countries that IRCC has resumed travel from, including: Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, UAE, Lebanon and Turkey.

IRCC’s ability to book travel for refugees sponsored to Canada under the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) program is still limited. IRCC is currently only able to arrange travel for sponsored refugees whose applications have been approved, and who are in possession of a permanent resident visa that was issued on or before March 18, 2020.

The situation in most countries of asylum is unpredictable and is constantly evolving. However, IRCC is continuously monitoring the conditions in each country and will resume travel from a particular country when the following four criteria are met:

1. The Visa Office that is responsible for that country

has resumed regular operations;

2. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is able to provide assistance and pre-departure services in that country;

3. The host government can issue documents, such as exit permits, and the refugees can move freely within the country so they can travel to the airport; and,

4. There are flights available from that country to Canada.

Once the above four conditions have been met, sponsors will be contacted by IRCC’s Resettlement Operations Centre – Ottawa (ROC-O) via email to confirm that:

1. They are able to welcome and support the refugees they have sponsored;

2. They have made suitable arrangements to ensure the refugees are able to comply with entry requirements for persons arriving in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

3. The refugees are willing to travel to Canada during the pandemic.

Sponsors are encouraged to be patient and to wait to be contacted by IRCC. It is vital that cosponsors provide ORAT with any changes to their contact information (i.e., email address, telephone number, mailing address).

Congratulations to ChrisAnn and Patrick!

On June 16th of this year, ChrisAnn, one of our two Outreach Assistants, and her husband Patrick welcomed their new baby, Thomas Francisco. Named after St. Thomas the Apostle, who, although doubted, was able to be the first to see Jesus for who He was with the proclamation of “my Lord and my God”. Thomas came into this world at 7.8lbs, with a calm demeanor and deep dimples. Please join us in congratulating ChrisAnn and Patrick and to thank God for the safe arrival of Thomas.



Your Input is Welcome

If you would like to contribute an article to ORAT’s newsletter, have any feedback on past articles, or have suggestions for future articles, please email us at: orateducator@archtoronto.org

ORAT Website

Please visit ORAT’s website to learn more about the PSR program, and to access an array of tools and resources that we have made available to assist CGs and cosponsors. Click on the following link to access our website:

<https://www.archtoronto.org/refugee/>

Join us on Facebook

Please follow our Facebook page to get the latest news and updates on resettlement issues. Click [Here](#) to access our Facebook page

Education Updates

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ORAT has moved all information sessions to an on-line webinar format. Until further notice, the office will not be holding any in-person information sessions.

For those not familiar with a webinar format, a webinar is an on-line, live virtual event that provides a two-way audio/visual communication between the speaker and attendees.

Registration for these events will continue through ORAT’s [Eventbrite](#) page. Attendees will receive a confirmation link 48 hours before the webinar begins, which they are to use to access the event.

Mandatory Quarantine for 14 Days:

When newcomers arrive in Canada, they **MUST quarantine for 14 days**. Please refer to our August newsletter for further details Click [here](#) to be redirected to the August newsletter.

The Office for Refugees is Supported by

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