



Refugees Digest 18 **July 2017**

Refugees, Migrants and Asylum Seekers.

The first link takes us to an important study on the importance of social attitudes in host communities towards migrants and refugees. It provides an analysis of the factors that frame various attitudes and the importance of taking cognisance of such attitudes in policy development. While the article focuses mainly on the UK it does take into account work done in the USA, Europe, Australia and South Africa. The second link takes us to wide endorsement amongst church groups and by Pope Francis for legislation in Italy that will overhaul some of the very restrictive laws with regard to migration. An emphasis in the new legislation is that of dignity and integration. In 2016, approximately 180,000 migrants arrived in Italy. The fifth link speaks to the same issue. Linked to this is the searing article [fourth link] on the fate of Africans making the long and treacherous journey to Europe.

The sixth link also speaks to the volumes of refugees crossing the Mediterranean in that journey it raises difficult questions. It problematizes attitudes of those in the receiving countries and grapples with harsh political issues. The third link goes to Pope Francis' meeting with 35 refugees hosted by parishes in Rome. In his talk with them he underlined the prejudice and hostility they faced and said "Love and fraternity go beyond religion. The violent do not possess religion, and religion does not bring violence." In an interesting idea the Vatican develops a proposal that aid to refugees arriving in host countries should be accompanied and supported but so should the local poor, so that aid benefits all the poor in a specific locale. That discussion that tilts towards a developmental discourse is found in the seventh link.

In a message to world leaders participating in the G20 meeting in Hamburg, Germany, Pope Francis urged them to "give absolute priority to the poor, refugees, those suffering, the displaced, those excluded, without national, racial, religious or cultural distinction." See link twelve. The Pope also supported the launch of the portal designed to give migrants and prospective migrants better information about the journey and about life in Europe. The thirteenth link leads to that story. In the USA, the Bishop of El Paso decried the attempts by various Attorneys General in the USA to ask the Trump administration to roll back the DREAM program which prevents migrants from being deported if they were brought to the USA as children. The Bishop called the Attorneys General 'modern day Pharisees.' See link eleven for the Bishops comments. It is interesting to note the emerging progressive theological narrative around people on the move, coming from so many parts of the world and also so many key players. It is truly a 'sign of the times.'

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