



Until February 2018 refugee was a word but on a cold snowy morning in Leasowe that changed when a group of five, three adults and two children visited Swap Shop looking for a coat and shoes for one of the children who despite the snow was wearing slippers. They spoke almost no English and we spoke no Arabic. With the help of google translate we learned that they had been in the UK three weeks and that they were refugees from Syria. Refugee was no longer just a word it was real people. The next week they came back and brought fellow travellers who were living in Birkenhead. I learned that shukran means thank you, sa-salum alaikum means peace be with you and inshallah means if it is God's will, and so began an amazing

Matthew 25:35-36
For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

journey which started Heart4Refugees. Roll forward to Spring of 2020 and the arrival of 56 young men seeking asylum to the Holiday Inn in Hoylake and those first refugees helped to feed these hungry frightened guys they helped translate and put them at ease and sharing their stories and experience. Hospitality is very important in Syrian culture and so to see the pleasure and pride as they shared "food from home" with the new visitors was my privilege. Through lockdown over 100 young men from many countries each with their own story were welcomed and fed. The original refugees returned the welcome they had received. Now the word refugee means friend.

Lord Jesus,

Your family on earth knew the life of refugees when they fled to Egypt, the fear, the loneliness the otherness. Bless all who seek refuge on this earth. Meet their needs of safety and shelter and wrap them in your love. Move the hearts of your people to show them welcome. Guide those with power and authority to end war and bring justice to all nations so that no one will need to flee again.

In your mercy Lord hear our prayer

Amen

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