



October 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

## BISHOP'S ADVENT APPEAL 2017

**This year's Advent Appeal aims to support homeless refugees and asylum seekers in Rome with humanitarian assistance (a daily, cooked breakfast and essential items for personal dignity and warmth) for 6 months. We are doing this through a well-established and well-run project established by our Episcopal sister church of St. Paul's Within the Walls.**

The **Joel Nafuma Refugee Center** is the major outreach ministry of St Paul's Within the Walls Episcopal Church in Rome. The center assists approximately 17,000 people per year, and is the only day center open to receive homeless asylum seekers and refugees in Rome. Every day, JNRC welcomes 200-250 guests. The guests come from many different nations, including Mali, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Somalia, Pakistan, Guinea and the Ivory Coast. Half of them are homeless, sleeping in parks or on the pavement outside train stations.

Many are vulnerable, depressed and traumatized. They are sometimes completely alone. They can be as young as 18 or 19. 70% have come to Italy to flee active conflict, political or religious persecution. Approximately 85% are men, and 15% are women or accompanied by a child.

While they wait for shelter, they are welcomed at JNRC, given a nutritious, cooked breakfast, as well as items for their personal dignity (toiletries, second-hand shoes, clothes and blankets), and offered legal advice. If they wish, they can join a language lesson, learn to use a computer or simply watch the news on the TV. JNRC has a multi-faith prayer space where guests can meditate and pray.

JNRC is the only place in Rome that takes in homeless and dormitory-housed refugees during the day, giving them a safe refuge from the streets. Often, once they have a dorm bed, they return to take classes, write a CV in Italian and begin the search for employment. Some guests attend music and art therapy or see a counsellor for individual sessions. JNRC prides itself on being able to track the progress of many young people who transition from humanitarian assistance, to being able to fend for themselves in Rome.

Under the terms of the Dublin Regulation, refugees who entered Italy first in Europe must receive and renew refugee status documents in Italy. This means that in 2017, JNRC has seen a **rise** in guest numbers due to the increased number of people journeying across the Mediterranean Sea from Libya, the closure of the Calais "Jungle" camp in France, and increased deportations from Scandinavia.

Rue Capitaine Crespel 47 box 49, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Tel: +3222137480; E-Mail: [bishop.europe@churchofengland.org](mailto:bishop.europe@churchofengland.org),

Diocesan web site: [www.europe.anglican.org/](http://www.europe.anglican.org/)

Charity Commission registration number: 250186

We aim to raise enough money to support the breakfast programme and to provide basic supplies and sleeping bags for JNRC guests for 6 months:

<b>For 6 months supply of:</b>	<b>Amount in Euro</b>
Food	€7,500
Cleaning supplies and costs	€2,000
Consumable supplies	€250
Kitchen Equipment	€750
Underwear, toiletries and socks	€1,750
100 Sleeping bags for January - March	€1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€13,250</b>



As usual, you can give money to this appeal through your church treasurer, who will forward your gift to the diocesan office. Funds will then be transmitted direct to JNRC (<http://jnrc.it/>).

Please do consider how you can support my Advent appeal this year.

With every blessing,

*+ Robert Gibraltar in Europe*

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