



## World Day of Migrants & Refugees



The Archdiocese of Toronto together with the parish community of Good Shepherd Chaldean Cathedral invites you to a special Mass on the occasion of the 111<sup>th</sup>

### World Day of Migrants *and* Refugees

Sunday, October 5, 2025  
11:00 AM

at Good Shepherd Chaldean Cathedral  
2 High Meadow Place, North York, Ontario

*Celebrant:*  
Most Reverend Robert Jarjis

*Homilist:*  
Most Reverend Ivan Camilleri

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."  
LEVITICUS 19:34



"Migrants, missionaries of hope" is the message of Pope Leo XIV for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR). To read Pope Leo XIV's complete message click [here](#).

We invite you to join us for a special Mass to mark this day on Sunday, October 5, 2025, at 11:00 AM at Good Shepherd Chaldean Cathedral, located at 2 High Meadow Place, North York, Ontario M9L 0A3. The Mass will be presided over by Bishop Robert Jarjis, with the homily delivered by Bishop Ivan Camilleri. All are welcome to attend.

We encourage parishes across the Archdiocese of Toronto to observe this significant day in the

following ways:

- *Include Prayers for Migrants and Refugees:* Incorporate intentions for migrants and refugees into the Prayers of the Faithful during Masses on or around October 5, 2025.
- *Celebrate Sponsored Families:* Acknowledge and honor any refugee families your parish has sponsored through ORAT's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program in recent years.
- *Recognize Parish Efforts:* Highlight the dedicated work of your parish refugee committee in supporting newcomers and fostering hope in our communities.

*Continues on page 2*

## 2026 Preparations Underway

Having completed our submissions for 2025, we are now awaiting the release of any additional spots from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). In the meantime, preparations for 2026 are already underway, with efforts focused on registering parishioners interested in sponsoring a refugee through our Constituent Group Partner Organizations (CGPOs). At this time, we are unable to announce any plans for members of the general public until IRCC confirms our 2026 allocation, which we anticipate receiving towards the end of February 2026.

## Table of Contents

World Day of Migrants & Refugees.....Page	1
2026 Preparations Underway.....Page	1
CG & Cosponsor Resources.....Page	2
Settlement Plan Tutorial Updated.....Page	2
Lebanon Country of Asylum.....Page	3
Refugee Story.....Page	3

## World Day of Migrants & Refugees

*Continued from page 1*

As God's children, let us unite in prayer and action to support those displaced by war, persecution, or violence. For more information about ORAT's mission and how you can get involved, please visit [www.orat.ca](http://www.orat.ca) or contact us at [oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org](mailto:oratrefugeeoffice@archtoronto.org).

Thank you for being missionaries of hope for migrants and refugees.



## Settlement Plan Tutorial Updated

The Office for Refugees (ORAT) has on-demand tutorial videos, designed to support Cosponsors, and Constituent Groups (CGs), to complete relevant Immigration application forms. The tutorials are regularly updated, to reflect any changes in Immigration application forms.

ORAT has recently updated the Settlement Plan (SAH) tutorial. We encourage Cosponsors and CGs to utilize the revised tutorial to complete their Settlement Plan (IMM 5440) – SAH Risk Management Plan A. Click [here](#) to access this tutorial.

The Settlement Plan (IMM 5440) – SAH Risk Management Plan A, is a document that details what a sponsor will do to orient and support their refugee (newcomer) during the sponsorship period in Canada. It provides sponsors with a framework for working through the many details of who will do what, when, how, and with what resources.

The Settlement Plan is used as a guide with the understanding that circumstances may change and may need to be revised to reflect any changes during the settlement period. It includes the settlement needs of every refugee applicant named on the Sponsorship Undertaking, including non-accompanying family members listed on the sponsorship forms (IMM 0008), even if they will not arrive to Canada at the same time as the principal applicant.

## CG & Cosponsor Resources - Your Guide to a Smooth Resettlement Year

Supporting a newcomer family through their first year in Canada is deeply rewarding — but it can also be complex. ORAT has two resources designed just for those involved in settling a refugee family. These include:

1. *Constituent Group (CG) Handbook*: A helpful resource for refugee committees to guide their work from pre-arrival to Month 13. This resource includes:

- Resettlement principles: integration, autonomy, prudent use of funds
- Building trust and managing expectations
- Pre-arrival communication, start-up items, and CG role assignments
- Budgeting, fund disbursement, and navigating the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)
- Arrival preparation and first-day priorities
- Post-arrival orientation, employment, conflict resolution, and family sponsorship
- Month 13 planning and transition to independence

2. *Sponsor Resource Toolbox*: A comprehensive, quick-reference hub with:

- New arrival task lists, cultural outings, parks, libraries, and recreation programs
- Employment, English language instruction, and financial guidance (budgeting, banking, taxes, benefits)
- Step-by-step help with government documents, healthcare, dental care, and mental health services
- Housing options, legal aid, education, settlement agencies, translation services, and start-up items
- Transportation, travel, and additional sponsor training programs

These resources are built to help Constituent Groups (CGs) stay organized, work as a team, avoid guesswork, and support their newcomer family's journey toward independence.

Both resources are available on our website ([www.orat.ca](http://www.orat.ca)). You can also access them by clicking [here](#). It is a roadmap and toolkit for parish refugee committees that help to ensure for a smooth, successful resettlement year.

The work of parish refugee committees changes lives and ORAT would like to ensure that our committee members have everything they need to succeed.



## Lebanon – Country of Asylum Report

Lebanon is a small but strategically significant country located in the Middle East, along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It shares land borders with Syria to the north and east, and Israel to the south. To the west, it has a coastline that stretches over 200 kilometers along the Mediterranean, giving it maritime access and historical significance as a hub for ancient trade and cultural exchange. Its capital, Beirut, sits on this coast and serves as a major economic and cultural center for the region.



Despite its small size, Lebanon's geography is diverse. The country features the Lebanon Mountain range running parallel to the coast, and the fertile Bekaa Valley lies between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. This variation in terrain creates multiple climate zones, with coastal areas enjoying a Mediterranean climate, while the mountains experience colder winters and occasional snowfall. Lebanon's location has made it a crossroads of civilizations for thousands of years, contributing to its rich cultural heritage and complex political history.

**Geo-historical context:** Lebanon's location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe has shaped its historical trajectory for thousands of years. Nestled on the eastern Mediterranean coast, the region has long served as a vital link between ancient civilizations. The Phoenicians, among the earliest maritime traders, emerged from this area around 1500 BCE, establishing city-states such as Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos. Their influence spread across the Mediterranean through trade and colonization, leaving a legacy of writing, navigation, and commerce. Later, Lebanon became part of a succession of empires, including the Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks under Alexander the Great, and Romans, each of which left cultural and architectural imprints on the land.

With the advent of Christianity and later Islam, Lebanon saw the rise of religious and cultural diversity that continues to define its identity. During the Arab

*Continues on page 4*

## Faith Amidst Persecution

### A Refugee's Story

My name is Tina, and I was born and raised in Iran in a nominal Muslim family. In 2006, during a deeply traumatic time when my father was gravely ill, a Christian friend offered to pray for me. For the first time, I experienced an overwhelming sense of peace and joy. The next day, I found myself speaking to God, asking Him for help. That same week, I had a vivid vision: I was trapped in mud until blood from a cross touched the ground and cleansed everything around me. I then heard a voice say, "I am Jesus, your Savior." That moment changed my life.

In 2007, I gave my heart to Jesus Christ. From that point on, my life was devoted to serving the church. I joined a local Assemblies of God congregation, attended discipleship classes, and served in church media. My transformation was clear to those around me. I later married a fellow church member named Attoh, but over time, he renounced his faith and became abusive. When I refused his demands for divorce, he used his father's government connections to threaten and harass me.

In 2013, as persecution against Christians intensified, our church was shut down and meetings moved underground. On returning from a Christian seminar in Istanbul, I was detained at the airport, interrogated, and nearly charged for carrying Bibles. Though my passport was returned, I was warned that the case was still open. My husband later threatened to have me arrested if I did not agree to the divorce. His harassment extended to my mother, and our home was searched multiple times. Fearing arrest and persecution, I fled to Turkey and sought asylum.

*Continued from page 5*



## Lebanon – Country of Asylum Report

*Continued from page 3*

Caliphates, it became a center for learning and trade, later falling under Ottoman control for over 400 years. The 20th century brought new transformations, with Lebanon falling under French mandate after World War I before gaining independence in 1943. Its coastal access, fertile valleys, and mountainous terrain have not only supported diverse communities but also drawn competing regional and global powers, shaping Lebanon into a mosaic of religious and ethnic groups with a complex modern history marked by periods of prosperity and conflict.

*Religious Affiliation & Impact on Religious Minorities:* Lebanon is uniquely characterized by its



religious diversity, with no single group forming an absolute majority. The country officially recognizes 18 religious sects,

including various Christian denominations (such as Maronite Catholics, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian Apostolic), several Muslim sects (Sunni, Shia, Druze, and Alawite), and smaller communities like Jews and Baha'is. This diversity is deeply embedded in Lebanon's political structure, where power is distributed among religious groups—a system known as confessionalism. For example, the president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shia Muslim. While this system aims to ensure representation, it also reinforces sectarian divisions and has been a source of political tension.

For religious minorities, Lebanon has historically been more accommodating than many other countries in the region, offering a degree of freedom in worship, education, and cultural expression. Christian communities have maintained a strong presence in public life and education. However, the confessional system can also marginalize smaller sects that lack significant political influence or representation, limiting their access to state resources and decision-making power.

Additionally, during periods of civil conflict or political instability, these communities may become vulnerable to discrimination, violence, or forced migration, highlighting the fragile balance between religious coexistence and sectarianism in the country's complex social fabric.

*Challenges for Refugees in Lebanon:* Refugees seeking asylum in Lebanon face numerous challenges, largely due to the country's limited resources, political instability, and already strained infrastructure. Lebanon hosts one of the highest numbers of refugees per capita in the world, primarily from neighboring Syria and historically from Palestine. However, it is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, which means refugees in Lebanon lack formal legal protections and often live in a state of uncertainty. Without official refugee status, many are unable to access legal employment, healthcare, or education, relying instead on informal work and humanitarian aid that is often inconsistent and underfunded.

Living conditions for refugees are frequently with many residing in overcrowded camps or makeshift shelters that lack basic sanitation and safety. The economic crisis that has gripped Lebanon in recent years, along with inflation and high unemployment, has further exacerbated tensions between host communities and refugee populations. Refugees often face discrimination and scapegoating, and government policies have at times included curfews, evictions, and restrictions on mobility. The lack of a long-term integration strategy leaves many refugees in a cycle of poverty and vulnerability, with few prospects for stability or a secure future within the country.

*ORAT's Support:* Since 2010, ORAT has proudly facilitated 1,324 sponsorship applications, assisting a total of 2,884 refugees seeking asylum in Lebanon. These individuals primarily come from Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and Iran. Through ORAT's dedicated efforts, they have given a vital opportunity to find safety, restore their dignity, and start anew with hope for a better future.

So far, 1,924 refugees have successfully resettled in Canada, while 186 applications for 386 refugees remain in progress. ORAT continues to be committed to refugee support, by aiding them throughout every step of the resettlement journey and providing them with the guidance, resources, and welcoming environment they need as they begin their new lives in Canada.

# Faith Amidst Persecution - A Refugee's Story

*Continued from page 3*



While in Turkey, I was diagnosed with cancer. But even in this, God was near. Through prayer and medical care, I survived — and my faith deepened. After a few years, a congregation in Toronto, in partnership with ORAT, sponsored me to come to Canada. I knew then that God was leading me to a new home, new family, and new beginning.

Before my arrival, my sponsor church encouraged me to improve my English. I am deeply grateful for that advice. Being able to com-

municate helped me integrate, make friends, and manage everyday life, from banking to public services. In Iran, I was not even allowed to ride a bicycle as a girl. Here, I learned to ride a bike, and in just my second month, I passed my motorcycle licensing test and bought my own motorbike. It's more affordable than a car and helps me get to church, work, and friends.

I've worked part-time in several positions despite my physical disability and am now preparing to begin college and transition into full-time work. I am especially thankful to the people at ORAT for praying for and helping someone they had never met. Your compassion changed my life.

If you're considering sponsoring refugees, please encourage them to learn English before they arrive to Canada. It is the most important tool they can have to start a new life here in Canada.

May the Lord bless you all.

## Supporting ORAT

Our work is supported by the generosity of the Archdiocese of Toronto, ShareLife, various collaborating organizations and the faithful. If you would like to donate to support the work of this office, please click the donate button.

**DONATE**

### ORAT Benefactors



Archdiocese  
of Toronto

**SL ShareLife**

### Collaborators

