

Our Journey - Seemab Younas

In January 2014, my family and I fled Pakistan due to religious persecution inflicted by Muslim extremists. My father, who runs an organization for the welfare of the Christian



community, and I, who work alongside him, became targets for our efforts to support impoverished Christians. Despite numerous threats and attempts to coerce our conversion, the situation escalated in October 2013 when our home was attacked, and our lives were threatened.

Thankfully, by the grace of God, we managed to seek refuge with relatives in another city. As the situation continued to deteriorate, our parish priest advised us to flee the country for our safety. With the assistance of our parish priest, we escaped to Thailand in January 2014, joining my three brothers, one sister, mother, and father in search of sanctuary.

Upon our arrival in Thailand, a friend of my father provided initial assistance, allowing us to stay with them temporarily. Following that brief stay, a church in Thailand assisted us with shelter. However, our undocumented status in Thailand posed significant challenges, including limited access to employment and essential services. Despite the hardships, we persevered, finding work in Indian restaurants and hotels, albeit under exploitative conditions.

In 2015, I married my fiancé, who had joined us in Thailand, further solidifying our resolve to build a better future for our family. However, our struggles persisted until 2016 when we were introduced to Father Michael Kelly, a Jesuit priest known for his assistance to refugees in Thailand. Despite his inability to offer financial aid, Father Michael connected us with the Office of Refugees (ORAT) organization, opening a path towards sponsorship in Canada.



in 2019, a team from ORAT visited us in Thailand, interviewed us and collected key information about our refugee claim. There we met with Deacon Rudy and other staff

members. All the staff were loving and caring. They visited our house too and took our story and gave us hope.

ORAT diligently processed our application, and over the following two years offered support and guidance throughout the arduous journey. In 2020, our sponsorship was approved by Immigration Canada, and on February 9, 2022, we landed in Canada.

Throughout the process, the compassionate teams at ORAT, both in Thailand and Canada, provided invaluable assistance, offering hope and reassurance during our darkest moments.

We are eternally grateful to God for guiding us to ORAT and to our sponsor church, St. Martin of Tours Parish, especially Father Gijo, whose unwavering support granted us the opportunity to live freely in Canada. Our journey has been marked by adversity, but through faith and perseverance, we have found refuge and a new beginning in our adopted homeland.

