

Prayer Vigil at the Home Office for Victims of Global Migration April 2024

Leader invites a few moments of silence and contemplation before the icon.

Opening Prayers

Leader We pray for those who will spend time during our service handing out leaflets to the public. We ask that our message will reach the hearts of people of good will on this street today.

Creator Spirit, wellspring of our lives, as the refreshing rain falls on the just and unjust alike,

All **Refresh us with your mercy, you who know our own injustice.**

Leader As the stream flows steadily on, defying all the odds of stone and water,

All **Flow over every boundary and border that separates us from each other.**

Leader As the waters of our baptism washed us and welcomed us,

All **Renew us now in newness of life and unity of love.**

Hymn – “I Come Like a Beggar”

I come like a beggar
with a gift in my hand,
I come like a beggar
with a gift in my hand.

**(R) By the hungry I will feed you,
By the poor I make you rich,
By the broken I will mend you,
Tell me, which one is which?**

I come like a prisoner
to bring you a key,
I come like a prisoner
to bring you a key. **R**

The need of another
is the gift that I bring,
The need of another
is the gift that I bring. **R**

Take the wine that I bring you
and the bread that I break,
Take the wine that I bring you
and the bread that I break. **R**

By Sydney Carter

Prayers of Repentance

Leader: Loving Jesus, as a child in fear of your life, you were forced to seek refuge in Egypt. You know what it is like to be rejected, and to be an outsider. You call us to love our neighbours as ourselves, but we have hardened our hearts against strangers.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: You told us not to judge, yet we listen to rumours and fail to check facts. We hear what is best for us and not what is good for those in need.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: You said we must welcome everyone, those speaking different languages and with different beliefs and cultures, but we have turned our backs on opportunities to widen our experience. We have shut out foreigners from our communities.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

Leader: Today we are called more than ever to welcome those fleeing from war. Open our hearts, and those of our neighbourhood, of our city, of our country and of our continent, to those who need our shelter.

All: Forgive us, and help us to change.

The List of the Dead

The names and details which follow are those of people who have died trying to obtain sanctuary in Europe or the UK. We read them so as to honour their lives and mourn the injustice of their deaths. Many are unknown, but as Pope Francis said, 'Every one has a name, a face and a story'. Today we mark those who died in April 2023.

After each entry, *Leader* says: Lord have mercy.

All respond: Christ, have mercy.

	Date	Details
1	1/4	6 people, including 2 children and 1 woman, drowned off Cartagena, Spain on the way from Oran, Algeria to Almeria, Spain; 9 survived.
2	1/4	A man in his 20s was found dead floating off Lampedusa by a Coast Guard patrol boat.
3	6/4	An Indian man of 40 died of unknown causes, his body & backpack found near a riverbank in Ignalina, Lithuania near the Belarusian border.
4	7/4	20 people from sub-Saharan Africa drowned when a boat sank off Sfax, Tunisia. 17 were rescued.
5	8/4	11 people, including a 2-year old boy and his parents from sub-Saharan Africa, and 8 people from Morocco, drowned when a boat sank off White Beach near Guelmim, Morocco on the way to the Canary Islands; 1 man survived.
6	8/4	7 people from sub-Saharan Africa drowned when a boat sank off Sfax, Tunisia on the way to Italy. 36 survived.
7	9/4	A man from Afghanistan died of unknown causes on train tracks close to Sid, Serbia near the Croatian border.
8	9/4	23 people from sub-Saharan Africa drowned in the Mediterranean; 22 were rescued by the civilian rescue ship <i>Nadir</i> after floating for 2 hours in the sea.
9	10/4	A man died of unknown cause, his body, backpack & mobile found in Belarus at the Belarus-Poland border fence.
10	12/4	40 people from Tunisia and sub-Saharan Africa, including 6 women, drowned when a boat sank off Sfax, Tunisia. 76 survived, including at least 9 children.
11	14/4	The decomposing bodies of 4 people, presumed drowned, were recovered off the Tunisian coast.
12	15/4	4 people, including a girl and a man, died in a head-on car crash while evading a police check at Makri, Greece near the Turkish border; 6 were injured.
13	17/4	A Nigerian man was found frozen at Schiphol Airport, Netherlands, in the wheel bay of a plane from Lagos, Nigeria.
14	18/4	A girl, 7 women and 11 men from sub-Saharan Africa drowned when a punctured inflatable boat capsized off Tan-Tan, Morocco on the way to the Canaries. 42 survived, including 3 children.
15	18/4	15 people from Tunisia, including 2 children and 2 women, drowned when a leaking boat sank off Asili Kairouan, Tunisia on the way from Kerkennah, Tunisia Europe; 4 were rescued by a passing civilian boat.
16	18/4	A man died of unknown causes, his body found by humanitarian workers near Janowo, Poland on the Belarusian border.
17	19/4	Fatmata, a 23-year-old pregnant woman from Sierra Leone, was shot dead by police near Gevgelija, North Macedonia at the Greek border during the arrest of a suspected smuggler. Her husband, Abu Bakar, was with her when she was shot. He was told there was no room for him in the ambulance and that a police car would take him to the hospital; instead, it took him to a detention centre where he was kept for 2 days with no knowledge of her. Police then

		offered to drive him to the Serbian border in exchange for his silence; he refused, and remains in North Macedonia, being the first undocumented migrant to bring a police officer to trial in that country.
18	19/4	1 person died when an overcrowded sailing boat on the way from Turkey ran aground on a beach near Itylo, Greece; 47 survived.
19	19/4	5 people from Bangladesh drowned near the coast of Zlitan, Libya in the Mediterranean Sea on the way to Europe; 30 survived.
20	19/4	A man died after an 8m long iron boat capsized off Lampedusa, Italy on the way from Africa; 55 survived, including 4 children.
21	20/4	19 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.
22	20/4	A man of 47 died when a boat hit rocks near coast of Peloponnese, Greece, his body brought ashore by fellow travellers; 47 survived.
23	22/4	14 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.
24	22/4	A man died of unknown causes, his body found by a passer-by near Istok, Poland near the Belarusian border.
25	23/4	26 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.
26	24/4	31 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.
27	24/4	10 people drowned off Lampedusa on the way from Sfax; 79 survived.
28	24/4	22 people from Ivory Coast drowned off Lampedusa on the way from Italy.
29	24/4	A man died in a hospital in Bialystok, Poland of injuries sustained 20 days earlier falling from the Poland-Belarus border wall.
30	24/4	15 people, including a 26-year-old woman, drowned when a boat capsized and sank off Lampedusa; 40 survived.
31	25/4	32 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.
32	25/4	19 people from Pakistan, Syria, Tunisia, Egypt and elsewhere, including 1 child, drowned off Qarabulli, Libya.
33	26/4	7 people were presumed drowned, their bodies recovered on beaches near Sfax.

Taken from UNITED List of Refugee Deaths, produced by UNITED for Intercultural Action (UNITEDAgainstRefugeeDeaths.eu). Collated from the following sources: 20MFR, Aawsat, AfricaNews, AlArabia, Aljazeera, AlarmPhone, ANSA, APNews, ArabNews, Astynomia, CEAD, Czaban, DiarioAvisos, DW, Euromed, Fanpage, GPK, Guardian, HellasPostsen, HelCoastG, IlSicilia, InfoMigrants, IOM, IOMItaly, IOMLibya, IOMSerbia, IOMTunisia, JordanTimes, KI, LahorDaily, LenaK, Le Monde, LiveSicilia, LuchtvNieuws, LV, NationPK, PalermoLive, PodlaskaPolicja, Punch, RAI, RefinLibya, Resqship, Reuters, RTLNieuws, SecondTree, SeaWatch, Swiss.ch, VOAafrlique, VSAT, wprost, Wyborcza, Wydarzenia, and YABI.

All: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

Hymn – “Wait for the Lord”

by Communauté de Taizé

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: keep watch, take heart! (x3)

Reading

(Today's reading from the Revised Common Lectionary)

(1 John 3:10-16) This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Reflection

Prayers of Intercession

*Everyone present reads in turn. All say the **response** in bold.*

We pray for the thousands of men, women and children, known and unknown, who set out to seek safety and a better life in Europe, but who were drowned in the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, the Aegean Sea, or the English Channel, and for those who mourn them. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for migrants who have met hostility or violence from authorities or vigilantes. We pray for those pushed back into the sea, and those forced into the desert. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for all those seeking sanctuary in the UK who depend on its adhering to the European Convention for Human Rights, and pray that our government will respect the agreement that we helped to draw up over 70 years ago. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the protection of all people in refugee camps in Calais and elsewhere and the communities they build. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for refugees arriving in the UK and being placed in detention in poor conditions at arrival, and those made homeless on being granted asylum. We pray for their mental and physical well-being and for the recognition of their right to decent housing. We pray for Ibrahima Bah and all others imprisoned through unjust laws. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for a resolution to the conflicts and oppression which are forcing so many to flee in desperation, for the end of the arms trade, and the realisation of the right of people to remain in their homes. We pray for the people of Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, Ukraine, and Palestine. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for those who are fleeing the effects of climate change, with rising sea levels, drought, flood or crop failure, yet who have caused little or no damage to our climate; for those who make decisions about compensation, and those who continue to exploit the earth for profit. We ask forgiveness for our complicity in this. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray for the safety and success of those serving aboard the rescue ships: the *Sea Watch 3*, the *Life Support*, the *Aurora*, the *Imara*, the *Rise Above*, the *Nadir*, the *Geo Barents*, the *Wind Express*, the *Ocean Viking*, the *Open Arms*, the *Aita Mari*, the *Trotamar III*, and others; and of the volunteers of the Alarm Phone, and the reception teams on the Greek and Italian islands. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray that you inspire compassion in all those who work with migrants on behalf of governments, and that they recognise all those they come across as their brothers and sisters. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

We pray that you create in all of us the strength and resilience to resist unjust immigration laws and to support one another in this struggle. O Lord hear our prayer, **and let our cry come unto you.**

Leader invites those present to add other prayers if they wish.

Concluding Prayer *by the Baptist Union of Great Britain*

All: God of all humanity,
When your people were enslaved and displaced
You led them to a land that they could call home.
When your people were in exile
Your promise was that one day
They would live in streets of play and laughter.
When your disciples were afraid and uncertain,
You spoke of your Father's House
With mansions and places prepared.

We pray today for all those who have no place to call home,
Hearing the heart-cry of your word
For those who are without refuge.
Where shelter is ours to offer
Grant us the will and resolve to reflect the generosity of our Creator.
Where others stand in the way of those who need safe haven
May our cry for justice never falter.
May the idols of self-interest and economic gain
Never deflect us from the ways of your Kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn – “The Scottish Magnificat”

My soul is filled with joy
As I sing to God my saviour:
You have looked upon your servant,
You have visited your people.

R: And holy is your name
Through all generations!
Everlasting is your mercy
To the people you have chosen,
And holy is your name.

I proclaim the pow'r of God,

To the hungry you give food,
send the rich away empty.
In your mercy you are mindful
of the people you have chosen. **R**

In your love you now fulfill
What you promised to your people.
I will praise you, Lord, my saviour,
Everlasting is your mercy. **R**

You do marvels for your servants;
Though you scatter the proud-hearted
And destroy the might of princes. **R**

*Words, David Haas Tune, Wild Mountain
Thyme*

All introduce themselves briefly. Any announcements are given.