

Refugee Crisis Meeting

Clonliffe College

Thursday, October 22nd

Beechwood Parish Representatives

Sr. Cora

Jane Wong

Sinead.... Crosscare

Conor.... Crosscare

Paul Anderson.... Communications Officer for the Red Cross

Sinead from Crosscare opened the evening with a very beautiful prayer, remembering all the victims who lost their lives trying to flee their war torn countries.

Testimonies

Rada from Syria. Rada and her brother came to Ireland as refugees. She described her life in the war torn Syria. She says every family there is under enormous pressure. Death threats are made constantly. Bombings everywhere, every day. Never able to sleep because of the nightly bombings. More than half of the population has left Syria because of the bombings and the constant living in fear. There is nothing normal about life in Syria. Rada and her brother leave behind their parents and extended family. They are in constant fear and worry desperately for their parents and families safety and health.

In Yodi's testimony she tells us that she arrived into Ireland in December. She recounted how she paid her people smugglers €15,000 to get her here. Her journey was gruelling over land and sea. Starving, no food or water, treated very very poorly by the people smugglers.

Crosscare

A social support agency. Provides to those most in need.

The plight of refugees is the area most in need at this moment.

This is an ongoing crisis- it is not new. Two and a half thousand people have already lost their lives trying to cross the waters in makeshift boats

So many people have offered support. The Irish people are desperate to help in any way they can.

So the government decided because of such a strong desire of the Irish people to help - something had to be done to support this.

The government decided we needed a co-ordinated response to harness the goodwill of the people.

The Irish Red Cross were asked to take on this role.

Ireland will be taking in three and a half thousand refugees and this will be done over a two year plan. Approximately four hundred refugees will enter Ireland every quarter. Two and a half thousand refugees will be sent over from Greece and Italy. The final thousand will come from a country to be decided at a later stage. We should also take into account that by reunification alone, the numbers entering into Ireland could increase significantly over the years ahead.

This is a two year program

The first group of refugees will arrive to Ireland at the beginning of January, 2016.

The government has set up a relief centre 'E.R.O.C'. This stands for Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre.

There will be three Reception and Orientation Centres set up in Dublin. The refugees will be brought here when they arrive into Ireland and they will remain here for approximately three months. The first 'pre-screening' process will already have taken place in Greece or Italy. The second stage of the processing will take place in the EROC Centres in Dublin.

There will be a range of services provided in these three centres.

Services in the E.R.O.C. will be available from the Red Cross to start with as the refugees will see the Red Cross as a safe international organisation who they can trust.

Once the refugees leave the centres they will need ongoing services and help.

A register of pledges has been set up. People can log on to the Red Cross website and pledge services they have to offer.

These pledges will be gathered until the time they are needed, where upon the person offering the pledge will then be contacted.

The Red Cross want to get people volunteering to help integrate professional services as soon as needed.

The role for communities will be needed from April onwards when the refugees leave the centres and are integrated into their new communities and parishes.

Parishes will be linked up with Crosscare - they will be co-ordinating the parishes.

John from The Irish Red Cross is suggesting what is put into place at the start of this process may not necessarily be what happens at the end of the first year for example. They may come up with better ideas that enable the process to flow in a better way all of this is to be determined as we go along.

Tusla (The Child and Family Agency), will take full control and responsibility for all unaccompanied minors who enter into Ireland.

Where will the E.R.O.C. centres be located? We do not know yet.

The Department of Justice has advertised for commercial expressions of interest. Buildings need to be approved as appropriate.

The Red Cross have unanimously decided it is necessary to spend a couple of thousand euros for advertising on social media etc.

How can communities help?

By offering suggestions

Registering offers and pledges.

Set up a parish fund and have a bank account number set up for people to donate money as they please.

We joined together in a very nice closing prayer delivered by Auxiliary Bishop, Ray Field.