

*J*esus is coming tonight, he comes as a child, tender, innocent. The children who are among us, the children who have died and those who are exploited. Let us think about the children; the Child Jesus comes among us, it is the love and tenderness of God. May God give us the grace to receive them with a lot of love. (Pope Francis in a telephone conversation with a group of refugees in Northern Iraq on Christmas Eve)



- Christ Unexpected -

Lord, we expected you to be grand,
but you have come as a helpless
infant.

We expected you at another time,
but you have come in the silence of
the night.

We expected you to be dazzling, a
king,
but you have come as a fragile man,
like us.

We thought you would be different,
but you are humble.

Hardly anyone recognises you
just seeing you is not enough.
We have to believe that you are God,
like this, so human.

We had our own idea of you
and you have defied all our
expectations.

Give us faith to believe in you
and recognise you
as you are

and as you have come to us.
(Miguel Alonzo Macías Honduras CAFOD)

An asylum seeker is a kneeling person; kneeling in front of the ship to ask for a reduced escape price; kneeling in front of the aid agency asking to be saved.
(Najeeba - Amnesty International Australia)

A U.S Army sergeant gives a young Kashmiri girl fresh water as they are airlifted to Islamabad.



If only you could feel how much it hurts to be locked up behind the fence.

If only you could know how my tears are falling down every moment.

If only you could know how much it means to me, to be a normal person, Like any other – like people outside the fence.

If only you could see how lonely I am without my family,
And knowing they are not safe.

If only you could hear me out and listen to why I came.

If only you could feel the pain inside my chest.

If only you could see how many times I wake up in the middle of the nights, My blue bag to Nauru waiting at my door.

If only you could see how many dreams I have for my future.

(Poem by 17 year old asylum seeker on Christmas Island – in SJ Statement 2015)



Seek truth ... do justice.

Word

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Response

Terror is at our heels.
Anxiety, uncertainty, vulnerability
Lie ahead.
We have fled to freedom.
And yet...
Our hearts are aching.
Response: Come to us O Lord
Far from home.
Longing for the familiar.
A touch, a smile, a hug, a kind word.
Yearning to return.
And yet...

We must go forwards.
Response: Come to us O Lord
Memories and dreams
Grief and hope
Death and new life
What might have been
What could be.
And yet...
Throughout
Remains
Your constant love.
Response: Come to us O Lord
(Margaret McNulty/CAFOD)



All our longing for life and love, for peace and happiness and for faith and justice lead us to the child, born in a stable for whom there was no room. (Steve Curtin SJ)

Prayer

God of light, shine forth,
show us how
to bring hope to others.

God of mercy, help us
to comfort your people and
share their joy.

God of hope, make us an Advent
people,
preparing the way for life
in all its fullness.

Amen

(Catherine Gorman/CAFOD)

Blessing

May the darkness of night be filled
with the radiance of the Child born to
bring peace, love and justice to the
world.

Amen

In our search for truth and justice may
we bring joy and peace to the lives of
others.

Amen

Make us people of the light, ready to
bring your life and love to the world in
wait.

Amen

