

*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**

