

Get Involved: Pray



EMBRACE Prayer Group November 2016

In the dark about the future: waiting in hope or despair?

Expectations can often be mixed – with future possibilities ranging from the fulfillment of hopes to the worst fears being realised. This is a time of national expectation and anxiety about the future. Many people who have lived all their lives in the UK do not know what to expect after we leave the EU. Will the country flourish or will there be a long period in the wilderness?

For people who were born in other European countries the anxieties are heightened. Will they be allowed to stay? Will their family members be able to visit them? Will people show increasing antagonism towards them? Others have very little hope, trafficked here for labour exploitation, domestic servitude or sexual abuse. Can they break free or will someone rescue them?

Will the Syrian refugees who have been resettled here see their wider family again? Will they ever be able to return to a peaceful Syria? Those who apply for asylum here, from many countries, may have years of waiting to hear if the Home Office will allow them to stay. They live in anticipation of the letter that will decide their future. Others have had their final refusal but, if the Home Office thinks it is too dangerous for them to return home, they may continue to live here, with hope almost extinguished, not allowed to work, without any financial support, and dependent on the charity of others.

The four candles in the Advent wreath can represent different things in our varied Christian traditions. One theme is Hope for the first candle, followed by Love, Joy and Peace. The Advent promise of Christ coming to stand among us has the potential to bring 'light for those who sit in darkness'. Christians can pray that others will find transforming comfort in their darkest days.

This Advent pray for

- The decision makers who are negotiating our future relationships with Europe and the rest of the world
- For all those who are fearful because their future seems uncertain
- For isolated victims of trafficking waiting to escape or be rescued
- For people waiting for decisions about their asylum applications
- For Syrian refugees trying to make a life here while fearing for the future of their home country, relatives and friends
- For destitute people in the asylum system, where hope has nearly gone
- For a living faith that brings the consolation of hope, love, joy and peace

Contributed by Margaret McNulty