

JRS DAY

RESOURCE GUIDE 2024

To be just...

To be just, is not enough to refrain from injustice. One must go further and refuse to play its game, substituting love for self-interest as the driving force of society."

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



Peacebuilding workshop for refugees in Afghanistan.



Introduction

In a moving story from his visit to a suburban slum in Latin America, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J., was invited to celebrate the Eucharist. The devotion and respect of the people, despite their dire poverty, deeply moved him. After the service, a man invited Fr. Arrupe to his humble dwelling, expressing his gratitude for the visit. The man wanted to share the only gift he had: the experience of watching the setting sun together. Fr. Arrupe reflected on this encounter, noting the man's kindness and the depth of his heart. This simple yet profound act of hospitality left a lasting impression on Fr. Arrupe, highlighting the intrinsic value and human dignity of each human person, regardless of their circumstances and status.

Inspired by Fr. Arrupe's legacy, JRS and other organizations continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the dignity and rights of refugees are respected, and they are able to find a durable solution including safe return, local integration or resettlement to a third country. Peace and security are strengthened when refugees are able to access their human rights.

Fr. Arrupe's story serves as a poignant reminder of the dignity and humanity of refugees, who are often forced to flee their homes due to war, persecution, human rights violations, and violence. **According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)¹, there are currently more than 120 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, including refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons.** This staggering number represents individuals who have been stripped of their homes, communities, and often their basic human rights, such as lack of access to basic needs (food, clean water, healthcare, and shelter), education (48% of refugee children are out of school), legal protection, and mental health and psychological support.

Pedro Arrupe, S.J. in Medellin, Colombia in 1968 (Jesuits Global)

Inspired by Fr. Arrupe's legacy, JRS and other organizations continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the dignity and rights of refugees are respected.

Almost all refugees crossing borders face life-threatening conditions such as robbery, sexual assault, and exposure to harsh elements ([Human Rights Watch](#))². Amnesty International's [2024 report](#)³ on the state of human rights highlighted continued human rights abuses endured by refugees and migrants including severe mistreatment and lack of adequate protection in detention facilities. Additionally, UNHCR reported that, as of 2024, there are more than 35 million refugees. This indicates an alarming increase (20 million more in the last 10 years) in the number of people forced to flee their homes, often harm they have suffered or fear of persecution, and underscores the urgent need for effective humanitarian responses.

Human rights violations against refugees and migrants continue to be a pressing global issue. In JRS's 44th anniversary year, inspired by Fr. Arrupe, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to advocate for and support those who are displaced. Let us reaffirm our commitment to social justice and faith that does justice, ensuring that all people, regardless of their circumstances, are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.



1. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/global-trends-report-2023>
2. <https://www.hrw.org/topic/refugees-and-migrants>
3. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/7200/2024/en/>

A group of Rohingya refugees arriving in Indonesia where they were met with emergency assistance from JRS.



"The world exists for everyone, because all of us were born with the same dignity. Differences of color, religion, talent, place of birth or residence, and so many others, cannot be used to justify the privileges of some over the rights of all. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development."

— Pope Francis, *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*

[FRATELLI TUTTI], NO. 118

Pedro Arrupe S.J. (seated, left) at Centro Astalli, Rome. Jesuit Father General between 1965-1983, Fr Arrupe set up the Jesuit Refugee Service in 1980. It was, he said, his swan song to the Society.

Call to Action

On November 14, 1980, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. founded Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) to "render a service that is human, pedagogical, and spiritual" for refugees. Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., has invited the global Ignatian family to recognize November 14 as JRS Day, the anniversary of the founding of JRS. Together, we hope to celebrate and honor the women and men whose lives have been changed through JRS, and the generous service of so many lay colleagues, Jesuits, and other clergy and religious.

This year, we call on all individuals and communities to stand in protecting human rights for all, especially refugees and migrants. We must advocate for policies that protect their rights, provide them with safe and legal pathways to migrate, and ensure their dignity is upheld. Fr. Pedro Arrupe's legacy and JRS's mission remind us that faith calls us to action, to serve, and to promote justice in a world that often marginalizes the most vulnerable. We encourage your community to also find a time to honor those who have been victims of human rights violations as they served people in refugee camps.



JRS staff in Amman, Jordan serving the refugee community at the annual Festival of Encounter.

How to Use this Resource

This resource can be used in the following ways:

- 1 Guide for both personal and communal prayer/reflection.
- 2 Resource for pastoral ministry initiatives, holy hours, holy Mass, social justice clubs, and Ignatian awareness activities.
- 3 Classroom reflection and teachings about human rights, social justice, forced displacement, and humanitarian response.
- 4 Toolkit for planning an event to honor the legacy of our founder Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. and Jesuit Refugee Service on **November 14**.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J, and the Cause for the Canonization

Pedro Arrupe was born on November 14, 1907, in the Basque region of Spain. He pursued a medical career until he decided to leave it behind and join the Jesuits in 1927. His care for others that motivated his medical studies only grew during his time as a Jesuit.

While living on the outskirts of Hiroshima during World War II, Fr. Arrupe witnessed the death, injuries and physical destruction caused by the atomic bomb dropped by the United States. In response to the injured and dying, Fr. Arrupe turned the Jesuit residence into a makeshift hospital and used his medical training caring for more than 100 people.

Fr. Arrupe's leadership abilities were affirmed when he was appointed Superior General of the Jesuits in 1965. During his tenure, he founded the Jesuit Refugee Service and guided the Jesuits through the reforms of Vatican II, making a renewed commitment to address the needs of the poor. He famously articulated the goal of Jesuit education as forming "men-and-women-for-others," an objective that Jesuit schools continue to pursue today.

Fr. Arrupe suffered a stroke in 1981 and resigned from his post as Superior General in 1983. He passed away on February 5, 1991, leaving behind a legacy that continues to guide the work of the Jesuits.

On February 5, 2019, the 28th anniversary of Fr. Arrupe's death, the cause for his beatification and canonization was officially opened at the Apostolic Palace of the Lateran in Rome. This significant event began a thorough examination of his life, virtues, and reputation for holiness. On February 19, 2024, the Society of Jesus announced that the sainthood cause of Servant of God, Pedro Arrupe, was moving forward following the conclusion of the "Diocesan phase," a crucial step in the canonization process. During this phase, the Historical Commission submitted nearly 10,000 pages of unpublished texts detailing his unwavering dedication to faith and justice.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe's journey toward sainthood is a testament to his extraordinary life, marked by deep faith and a commitment to justice. His spiritual leadership and compassionate actions during times of crisis, such as his response to the Hiroshima bombing, continue to inspire many. The advancement of his canonization process celebrates his enduring legacy and recognizes his contributions to the Church and humanity.

JRS anniversary celebration in India, honoring Fr. Pedro Arrupe's work around the world.



A Call for Justice

In a world where more than 120 million people are forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution, and violence, the need for justice and compassion has never been more urgent. Refugees often encounter severe challenges, such as lack of access to basic needs, educational barriers, legal obstacles, and mental health struggles. Overcrowded camps and limited resources leave many without adequate food, clean water, healthcare, or shelter. Nearly half of refugee children are out of school, and the trauma of displacement takes a severe toll on mental health, necessitating comprehensive psychological and social support. JRS's work, rooted in human dignity and human rights, restores dignity and hope to those who need it most through essential services, advocacy, and accompaniment – essentially, being a friend.

Joining this mission aligns with the Jesuit principle of being “people for others,” emphasizing solidarity and social justice. Together, through our collective efforts, we can uphold Fr. Pedro Arrupe's legacy and transform lives, promoting a world where everyone is treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Which Specific Human Rights Are Most Commonly Violated for Refugees and Migrants?

Reflect on the articles in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights)⁴ and consider how these rights are being denied to refugees and migrants. For example, how are their rights to life, liberty, and security (Article 3), the right to seek asylum (Article 14), and the right to an adequate standard of living (Article 25) being infringed upon in current global contexts?

How Do Current News Stories and Personal Narratives Illustrate These Human Rights Violations?

Think about recent news stories or personal accounts of refugees and migrants. How do these stories highlight the challenges they face, such as detention in unsafe conditions, lack of access to basic services, or separation from families? How do these narratives help us understand the human impact of these violations?

What Actions Can We Take to Address and Prevent Human Rights Violations Against Refugees and Migrants?

Consider what specific steps you and your community can take to advocate for the protection of refugees and migrants. How can you raise awareness, influence policy, or provide direct support to those affected by these violations? What role can you play in promoting and protecting the human rights of all individuals, regardless of their status or origin?

4. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

Stories of Hope:

Reflecting on the Human Rights and Actions for Change

JRS's work in Sudan focuses on supporting refugees, linking them to fundamental human rights such as the right to life, education, and shelter. By providing aid and essential services, including educational and psychological support, JRS ensures that refugees can maintain their dignity and pursue education despite displacement. This effort underscores their commitment to upholding human rights amidst the crisis.

Similarly, in the Middle East, JRS safeguards human dignity by providing refugees with access to education, healthcare, and social services. This initiative supports refugees' rights to live with dignity and access essential services, aligning with its broader mission to protect fundamental human rights. By addressing immediate needs and supporting long-term recovery efforts, JRS contributes significantly to empowering refugees and fostering resilience within communities facing displacement.

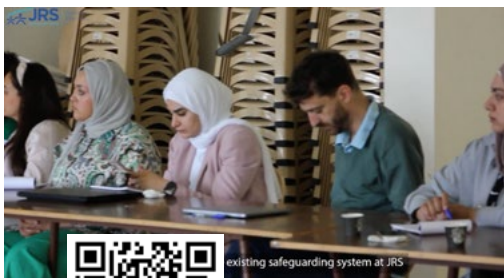
Supporting Refugees in Sudan



Sudan is a nation where countless lives have been upended by conflict, leading to a significant refugee crisis. JRS has been instrumental in providing aid to those fleeing the turmoil. Support ranges from providing basic needs such as food and shelter to offering psychological and educational services, ensuring that refugees can rebuild their lives with dignity.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPS3MaUMIP4>

Safeguarding Human Dignity in the Middle East



In the Middle East, where conflict has wrought widespread devastation, JRS focuses on safeguarding human dignity. Through comprehensive programs, JRS assists refugees in navigating the challenges of displacement, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and social services. These efforts address immediate needs and pave the way for long-term recovery and stability.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPS3MaUMIP4>

Finding Hope Amid Crisis



Hope is a powerful force that drives individuals to overcome even the most harrowing circumstances. JRS embodies this spirit of hope, working relentlessly to support displaced individuals and communities. Their initiatives provide a lifeline to those in desperate need, fostering an environment where hope can flourish despite the odds.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bbU9zNQULc>

Questions for Reflection

- How can we, as individuals and communities, contribute to safeguarding the human rights of refugees?
- What actions can we take to support organizations like JRS in their mission to provide aid and restore dignity to displaced individuals?
- How does hearing the stories of refugees and their resilience inspire us to take action in our own lives?
- You can make a difference in the lives of refugees by supporting the efforts of JRS. Whether through donations, volunteering, or raising awareness, every action counts. Together, we can ensure that the plight of displaced individuals is not forgotten, and that hope continues to thrive amidst adversity.

Defend Human Rights for those Forcibly Displaced

Join JRS in a non-violent initiative to defend human rights for refugees and other people forced to leave their homes. On this occasion we invite you to organize a Circle of Silence. The Circles of Silence were initiated in France by the Franciscans of Toulouse at the end of 2007. Some 10,000 people, believers and non-believers, meet in more than 120 cities one day a month at a specific time to become aware, to reflect, and to be an element of interruption to society about the extremely serious situations people are dealing with around the world.

What does it consist of?

The Circle of Silence is 15 minutes to stop, listen, reflect, and pray, if one is a believer. It culminates with the reading of a manifesto.

What is this act based on?

The Circle of Silence is a recognition of the importance of stopping what we are doing, remaining still, and listening to oneself deeply – understanding we must change ourselves before we can make change in the world.

- Silence is itself a mode of action that unites people who might otherwise be easily divided by ideologies or beliefs.
- Silence reflects the gravity of the situation. It is a cry without rancor, arising from a wounded humanity, but rooted in the fervent hope that exists in all of us.
- Silence is particularly powerful as a personal experience lived within a group. It summons and is within reach of all people of goodwill.



Planning your Circle of Silence

When designing your Circle of Silence, you might consider:

- Beginning with the testimony of a refugee or migrant about their experience. Feel free to use one of the videos suggested in this resource.
- Beginning with a reflection, prayer or relevant passage from another written work. For this purpose, you can use the introduction above and the questions suggested in this resource.
- Having participants hold candles or hold hands.
- Having a range of posters, signs, or placards help by participants or displayed around the circle. Printing flyers to hand out is also a way to tell the public about the significance of the Circle. Include some of the questions for reflection.
- Holding the circle for 15 to 30 minutes and taking pictures to share on social media, tagging JRS/USA.
- Concluding the Circle with the suggested prayer, which you can find at the end of this resource.

If you need support on organizing a Circle of Silence, reach out to JRS/USA Outreach Officer clara.sayans@jrsusa.org

Pray with us



Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

God of all,

Source of compassion and justice,
We come before you with heavy hearts,
Lifting up all those who are displaced,
Enduring the pain of injustice and the violation of their rights.

You, who once were a refugee,
Understand the fear, the loss, and the uncertainty,
We ask for your grace and protection
For those forced to flee their homes
Due to war, persecution, and violence.

In the darkness of their journey, be their guiding light.
In their moments of despair, be their hope.
Strengthen them in their vulnerability,
And surround them with your love and mercy.

Lord, teach us to care deeply and act justly,
To stand in solidarity with our displaced brothers and sisters,
To advocate for their rights and dignity,
To offer them not only our prayers but our hands and hearts.

Inspire us to see your image in every refugee,
To recognize their inherent worth and dignity,
And to work tirelessly to create a world
Where all are safe, valued, and free.

May our actions reflect your boundless love,
And may we be instruments of your peace and justice,
Bringing comfort to the afflicted
And hope to the downtrodden.

Amen



Girls attending complementary education classes in Kabul, Afghanistan.

To be just...

"To be just, is not enough to refrain from injustice. One must go further and refuse to play its game, substituting love for self-interest as the driving force of society."

— Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



MHPSS services conducted by JRS in Renk, South Sudan as a part of the response to the Sudan crisis.



Family is Syria who received MHPSS after the earthquake in Syria in 2023.



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1627 K Street NW, Suite 1100 | Washington DC 20006



Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organization serving refugees and other forcibly displaced people. JRS's mission is to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future. Founded as a work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1980, JRS today works in 58 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, and social needs of more than 1.2 million refugees (2023).