

JRS DAY

RESOURCE GUIDE 2025

Reckless Love, Radical Hope

*"Oh Lord, teach me
that this foolishness is Your wisdom,
and give me such love for You
that I too may become
another fool like You."*

Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.



Skilling circles, Afghanistan



Festival of Encounter, Jordan



World Day of Migrants and Refugees Procession,
United States.

Introduction

Pedro Arrupe, S.J., was a man deeply shaped by hope. His life, marked by human suffering—from coming to the assistance of residents of Hiroshima in the immediate aftermath of the dropping of the atomic bomb, responding to the needs of the displaced in refugee camps—never lost sight of the **possibility of a more just world.**

Fr. Arrupe was no idealist. He was a radical optimist, convinced that **love is stronger than death**, and that even in the midst of destruction, life finds a way. His spirituality was not limited to contemplation: It was a lived faith, expressed through concrete acts of compassion, justice, and reconciliation. At Jesuit General Congregation 32 in 1974, Fr. Arrupe promoted a vision that remains at the heart of JRS's mission: **Faith and the promotion of justice are inseparable.** As he himself said, it's not about following ideological trends, but about living Christ's way in our time.

Inspired by Fr. Arrupe and drawn to Jesus, we try to follow the example of one who kneels before suffering but also rises to meet the other. It has been shown that encounters between migrants and host communities reduce prejudice, strengthen social cohesion, and promote reconciliation. Creating spaces for interaction between diverse groups builds trust, breaks down stigma, and fosters lasting connections. These meaningful interactions not only transform relationships—they also **strengthen the social fabric.** (2)

We also know that community advocacy and grassroots storytelling allow displaced people to reclaim their voices, influence public policy, and transform their environments. (3) Moreover, participatory processes and community empowerment are essential for achieving **sustainable solutions.** (4)

This approach not only **promotes local ownership**—it is also key to reconciliation, justice, and peacebuilding. When communities take the lead in their own development, they create spaces of encounter that transform both those who welcome and those who arrive.

JRS's experience through reconciliation programs and advocacy initiatives confirms that when communities organize, listen, and come together, **faith becomes a transformative force.** The community-based approach is not just an operational strategy—it is a concrete way of embodying the call to build a more just, more humane, and more fraternal world.

1 Translated from Spanish from the Meeting with Provincials, Mexico City, November 1972.

2 <https://publications.iom.int/books/power-contact-designing-facilitating-and-evaluating-social-mixing-activities-strengthen>

3 <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/advocacy>

4 <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-02/practical-guide-for-participatory-assessments-en.pdf>

Another Fool Like You

In times of forced displacement, polarization, and violence, our faith calls us to a hope that dares to defy the impossible. As Fr. Arrupe once said:

“Oh Lord, teach me that this foolishness is Your wisdom, and give me such love for You, that I too may become another fool like You

-Father Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

To be “another fool like You” is to accept the risk of loving without limits. It means leaving behind the calculations that paralyze us and embracing the boldness of the Gospel: defending the dignity of every person, even when it costs us.

This “holy madness” moves us to:

- Organize communities, so that change is collective and sustainable.
- Reconcile, healing wounds between peoples, cultures, and hearts.
- Create just relationships, where every person is recognized in their dignity.
- Foster spaces of encounter, where the other is not a threat, but a brother or sister.
- Engage in advocacy so that the voices of displaced people reach decision-making spaces.

Today, more than ever, we need that transformative madness. As Fr. Arrupe urged: ***“We cannot demand the same degree of optimism from everyone... but we must all, at the very least, reject pessimism outright.”*** (5)

We must raise our voices for those who cannot speak, build bridges where walls stand, and dream of a world where fraternity, peace, and reconciliation are possible. Because hope is not a feeling—it is a decision. And at JRS, we choose to believe that the impossible is possible.

May this **JRS Day 2025** be a call to become “other fools like You”: fools for justice, for peace, for humanity.

5 https://www.jesuites.net/sites/default/files/dossier_arrupe_reducido.pdf



The annual Festival of Encounter organized by JRS in Jordan

How to Use this Resource

This resource is more than a one-day reflection; it's an invitation to sustained action and community transformation. Use it to:

- 1 Ignite prayer and reflection—personally or in groups—to deepen your commitment to faith, justice, and reconciliation.
- 2 Inspire pastoral ministry, parish outreach, and Ignatian formation through homilies, retreats, and small group discussions.
- 3 Educate and empower students and community members on human rights, forced displacement, and the Gospel call to justice.
- 4 Organize public witness events, prayer vigils, or marches that lift up the voices of displaced people and promote reconciliation.
- 5 Create spaces of encounter—through storytelling, shared meals, or dialogue circles—that foster healing and solidarity.
- 6 Mobilize grassroots advocacy by forming local teams to engage in policy change, accompaniment, and community organizing.

A Call for Reconciliation

In a world marked by division, historical wounds, and ongoing conflict, reconciliation is not just a spiritual ideal—ideal, it is an urgent necessity for human coexistence.

“What can I do, in the face of such great evils? The globalization of powerlessness is the offspring of a lie: that history has always gone this way, that history is written by the victors. But that is not true: history is devastated by the powerful, but it is saved by the humble, the righteous, the martyrs, in whom goodness shines forth and authentic humanity resists and is renewed.” (6)

This call resonates strongly in our communities, where social, political, and cultural fractures often prevent authentic encounter. Reconciliation begins in the everyday—in our closest relationships—but it also demands structures of justice, memory, and participation.



Children attending classes in a JRS school in Bar Elias. Francesco Malavolta/Jesuit Refugee Service

Reconciliation in Action

Listening to the Cry of Local Pain

The first step is to honestly examine our local realities: divided neighborhoods, broken families, exclusion of migrants, structural racism, and unhealed historical wounds. Listening is the first act of reconciliation. As a community, we can create safe spaces for listening, dialogue circles, or intergenerational gatherings that allow pain to be acknowledged without judgment.

6 <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250912-videomessaggio-progetto-unesco.html>

Organizing Hope – Advocacy Rooted in Reconciliation

Reconciliation is not just symbolic—it translates into action. Through community organizing, we can influence public policies that promote equity, justice, and inclusion.

We can build advocacy networks that work toward migrant regularization, racial justice, historical reparations, and the transformation of systems that perpetuate exclusion.

Responding to this call means embodying the spirit of being “artisans of peace.” It means living our faith through action, through commitment to the other—especially to those who have been marginalized.

“Reconciliation is the art of weaving the future with threads of truth, justice, and compassion.”⁶

Together, we can be part of that tapestry.

Healing Through Encounter and Truth

This moment calls us to build community processes of memory, restorative justice, and mutual recognition.

“It is necessary to repair what has been broken, treat bleeding memories with delicacy, approach one another with patience, identify with the history and pain of others, and recognize that we have the same dreams and the same hopes. Enemies do not exist: only brothers and sisters exist. It is the culture of reconciliation. There is a need for gestures of reconciliation and policies of reconciliation.” (6)

⁶ <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/pont-messages/2025/documents/20250912-videomessaggio-progetto-unesco.html>

Stories of Hope

The Festival of Encounter



The Festival of Encounter, organized annually by JRS Jordan, is a vibrant celebration of diversity and resilience. This special event creates a welcoming space where refugee and migrant communities living in Jordan come together to express their identities through rich cultural and artistic traditions. More than just a festival, is a powerful act of community-building and mutual recognition—an opportunity to honor the beauty of difference and foster peace through shared humanity.



<https://www.jrsusa.org/story/peace-in-diversity-festival-of-encounter-2025/>

The Jubilee of Migrants



Across the globe—from Uganda to Italy, the United States to the border between Ecuador and Peru—JRS offices marked the Jubilee of Migrants with powerful acts of solidarity: pilgrimages, processions, Masses, and public prayers held alongside refugees and the communities that welcome them. These symbolic gestures of walking together embodied JRS's mission to build bridges of hope, bringing people together and inspiring a global movement rooted in compassion and unity. As Br. Michael Schöpf SJ, JRS International Director, reminds us: “In the face of hostility and numbness, what saves us is community.”



<https://jrs.net/en/news/jubilee-of-migrants-together-to-build-bridges-of-hope/>

Stories of Hope

Community Organizing



In the informal settlements of Afghanistan, JRS is helping communities stitch together hope—quite literally—through sewing and vocational training programs that empower displaced women. But beyond skills development, these initiatives serve a deeper purpose: community organizing becomes a pathway to reconciliation, healing divisions and fostering solidarity among neighbors. By creating spaces where people can gather, learn, and support one another, JRS is helping rebuild trust and restore relationships in places marked by displacement and hardship.



<https://jrs.net/en/story/sewing-stitches-of-hope-in-informal-settlements-in-afghanistan/>

Reflection Questions:

Where are the open wounds in our community? Whose voices have been silenced or ignored?

How can we promote initiatives that bring visibility to the stories of those who have experienced exclusion or violence? What role can our parishes, schools, or community centers play in facilitating these encounters?

What movements already exist at the local level that we can learn from or join as a community? What networks can we build to walk alongside others and amplify the message—further, louder, and stronger—to public institutions?

Gathering Ground: A Guide Inspired by Reconciliation

In a time marked by division, fear, and growing rejection of migrants, Gathering Ground offers a pastoral response rooted in faith and reconciliation. This guide is designed to help communities create brave spaces where neighbors—regardless of their background—can come together, listen deeply, and begin rebuilding trust and the fabric of community.

By fostering understanding and dismantling harmful narratives, Gathering Ground becomes a sacred space for healing, encounter, and shared hope.

What Is Gathering Ground?

Gathering Ground is a community initiative by JRS/USA that invites local groups to create brave spaces of hospitality, healing, and encounter. Through shared meals, storytelling, and guided reflection, this program promotes just relationships.

In contexts where communities have been divided by history, injustice, ideology, or identity, these brave spaces become fertile ground for truth-telling, listening, and healing.

How Can It Help Your Community?

Strengthen bonds: Bring together people from diverse backgrounds to share stories, build trust, and grow in solidarity.

Foster awareness and empathy: Create spaces to deeply listen to the experiences of our neighbors and reflect on how the Gospel calls us to respond.

Discern and act together: Inspire collective action rooted in faith—whether through accompaniment, advocacy, or community initiatives that support migrants and refugees.

Download the Full Guide **Scan the QR code** to access the complete toolkit, including reflections, activities, and resources to help you implement **Gathering Ground** in your community.



Pray with us



Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Lord Jesus,
You who were reckless with love,
who embraced the excluded, healed the
wounded,
and broke down borders with Your
tenderness,
teach us to live with that same boldness.
In this world fractured by fear and
indifference,
make us bearers of radical optimism—
the kind that does not deny suffering but
believes in resurrection.
May the legacy of Pedro Arrupe inspire us
to be courageous in faith,
builders of reconciliation through small acts,
and tireless protectors of our most vulnerable
brothers and sisters.
Give us the power of Your Gospel,
the hope that transforms,
and the courage to build community
where others only see division.
Jesus, may Your Spirit guide us
to be fertile ground for encounter,
and cultivators of peace in every corner of
our lives.
Amen.

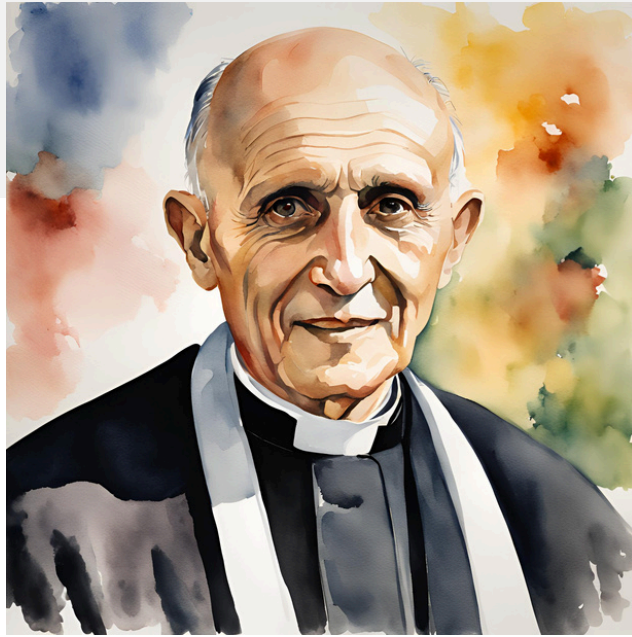
Another Fool Like You

Lord, give me Your love,
a love that makes me let go of my “human
prudence”
and pushes me to take the leap—
like Saint Peter—to come to You:
for I will not sink as long as I trust in You.

I don't want to hear:
"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"
So many theological, ascetical,
and “prudent” human reasons
rise up in my spirit
and try to convince me—
under the guise of good—
with many human arguments,
that what You inspire and ask of me
is reckless: madness.

You, Lord, by that logic,
were “the most foolish of men,”
for You invented the madness of the cross!
Oh Lord, teach me
that this madness is Your wisdom,
and give me such love for You
that I too may become
another fool like You.
—Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

(Translated from Spanish from the Meeting with Provincials, Mexico City, November 1972.)



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

Pedro Arrupe was born on November 14, 1907, in the Basque Country of Spain. He initially pursued a career in medicine, but in 1927 he chose to leave that path and enter the Society of Jesus. His vocation of service, which had led him to study medicine, deepened even further during his life as a Jesuit.

While living on the outskirts of Hiroshima during World War II, Fr. Arrupe witnessed the death, injuries, and physical devastation caused by the atomic bomb dropped by the United States. In response to the suffering of the wounded and dying, he turned the Jesuit residence into an improvised hospital and used his medical training to care for more than 100 people.

Fr. Arrupe's leadership abilities were recognized when he was appointed Superior General of the Jesuits in 1965. During his tenure, he founded the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and guided the Society of Jesus through the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, renewing its commitment to serving the poor. He is renowned for defining the goal of Jesuit education as the formation of "men and women for others," a mission that Jesuit schools continue to pursue today.

Fr. Arrupe suffered a stroke in 1981 and resigned from his role 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 his death, the cause for his beatification and canonization was officially opened at the Apostolic Palace of the Lateran in Rome. This event marked the beginning of a thorough examination of his life, virtues, and reputation for holiness.

On February 19, 2024, the Society of Jesus announced that the canonization cause of the Servant of God Pedro Arrupe was advancing following the conclusion of the “diocesan phase,” a crucial step in the process. During this phase, the Historical Commission presented nearly 10,000 pages of previously unpublished texts detailing his steadfast dedication to faith and justice.

Fr. Pedro Arrupe’s path to sainthood is a testament to his extraordinary life, marked by deep faith and a commitment to justice. His spiritual leadership and compassionate actions in times of crisis—such as his response to the bombing of Hiroshima—continue to inspire many. The progress in his canonization process celebrates his enduring legacy and acknowledges his contributions to the Church and to humanity.



Fr Pedro Arrupe SJ visiting children at a boarding school in India (Society of Jesus).



The Youth Development project at the Refugee Community Center (RCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Francesco Malavolta/Jesuit Refugee Service).



A community workshop for internally displaced people in Homs, Syria.



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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).