

December 25, 2022

## 4. The Holy Family Becomes Refugees — **Matthew 2:13–18, NRSV**

In late November, Elena Galushko had a baby. Like the birth of the baby we celebrate this week, the circumstances before and after this birth were complicated. Like that baby, Galushko's daughter is an infant refugee.<sup>1</sup> Today, more people are displaced than at any other time since World War II.<sup>2</sup> Since 2021, approximately one million people have become refugees, with an estimated total of 27.1 million refugees globally.<sup>3</sup>

Ricardo Esquivia, director of Columbian Mennonite justice and peacebuilding nonprofit Sembrandopaz, recently said, "The smartphone and the face mask are not the only signs of these times, but also the mass migration of peoples from one place to another: people on the move within and outside countries, people on the move due to war, hunger, a global climate crisis and economic desperation." Esquivia adds, "As churches, we are called to interpret these signs of the times, to understand the impact of migration and to seek ways to respond to migration: doing so is a missionary mandate."<sup>4</sup>

The poem "**Home**" by Warsan Shire begins, "No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark." In such a situation, Galushko's family left Ukraine last February, traveling through Europe to Mexico. There, on the Tijuana border wall are artistic displays illustrating the hope of finding a better life through migration. Mexican volunteers took Galushko's family to the border, where they were met by American church volunteers.

Mennonite Central Committee's national boards are calling on MCC to "increase the capacity of the church and other partners as they support and equip vulnerable people, especially people who have been uprooted and displaced."<sup>5</sup>

We too can increase our capacity to respond, wherever we are on our journey toward understanding the displaced. This can range from learning more, such as by watching and discussing the newly released biographical drama *The Swimmers*, supporting ministries with immigrants, helping a new arrival with paperwork and translation, participating in sponsorship and advocacy, or recognizing refugees and others who are experiencing homelessness in our communities.

- Where are you on your refugee journey? What steps can you take?
- Who are the refugees in your community? What ministries serve them? What do they need?

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1. "[\*\*Ukrainian Refugees in US 'Have Nowhere to Return'\*\*](#)"

2. "[\*\*Refugees\*\*](#)"

3. "[\*\*Six Things You'll Learn About Refugees in Netflix's 'The Swimmers'\*\*](#)"

4. "[\*\*Advocating for People on the Move\*\*](#)"

5. "Advocating for People on the Move"



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## Resources for session 4

“Refugee King” is a rare Christmas song that tells the story of Jesus’ refugee status as an infant whose family had to flee to Egypt. Listen to it as part of this week’s Spiritual Practice and consider playing it for your group study. Several versions are available on YouTube.

## Resources for this session

**Salt & Light Videos** are great for leader preparation or introducing each weekly session. **James Mast**, a teacher at Methacton Mennonite Church, is the presenter for unit 1. The videos are closed-captioned, free, and available on [MennoMedia’s YouTube channel](#).