



REFUGEES: Continuing the Prayers... and more

St Mary's Stratford.

The first parish service for the year was on Refugee Sunday, so we liaised with Red Cross who resettle refugees in Palmerston North. At our regular Chapel service the previous week we introduced the Marks of Mission, and focused on *Refugees* as a way of enacting the third Mark (“Responding to human need with loving service”). We played a Unicef video for around 10 minutes on life in a refugee camp. We asked the girls to bring school stationary for refugee children resettling here, and the year 9 Social Studies class each made “welcome to NZ” cards for the resettling families.

We also let the parish know ahead of time that we were collecting homemade “welcome to NZ” cards, gluesticks, high-lighters, pencil sharpeners, large pencil cases, drink bottles, rulers and cash.

Two years ago, Anglican Schools across Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia joined together in a 24 Hour Prayer Vigil for the refugee crisis. Prayer and actions combined, and hundreds of letters and good wishes were sent to young people at a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan.

That was by no means the end of the story, however. Since then our schools have continued to pray and act to raise awareness, knowledge, and aid for those in our own country and beyond seeking a safe place to live. As we approach the second anniversary of that vigil, it seemed a good time to hear more of what they are continuing to do.

In that service we also spoke of the “doing our bit” website (<http://www.doingourbit.co.nz/>) and promoted a local meeting that was being held about increasing the refugee quota. We used this as examples of the 4th Mark of Mission— the transformation of unjust societal structures. ++Philip who preached and presided beautifully at our service at All Saints in Stratford also challenged the girls about the low quota.

Annie Baigent: Chaplain



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**Anglican Schools
Praying for Refugees**