



Current Issues in Prayer

January 2025

Welcome! The Pope invites people of good will to come together and pray **for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, might always be respected.**



Getting started:

I find a quiet spot to feel God's presence within me. I reflect on the importance of education in my personal life and thank the Lord for it.



Short story:

Fr Bernard returned for a short trip home from war-torn Gaza in Palestine. Although it was meant to be a break for him, he made sure to appeal for the much-needed aid and support in the area. One morning he was invited to address educators and children in the main hall of a local school where he had served as chaplain two years before.

Fr Bernard gave a few shocking stories and statistics:

400 million children live in countries affected by war and conflict. Although it is the right of every child to receive formal education, more than 32 million children across the world have never seen a teacher as a result of armed conflict. Despite being a basic rule of war, the protection of children is violated by many countries. The future of entire generations of children is affected by war and these children will grow without the skills they need to contribute to their countries and economies.

The speech by Fr Bernard helped the children reflect on their own schooling and the safety that this gave them. It provided space for growth and protection from threats and crisis, and a place where they could learn about building a community on the values of peace, unity and harmony.

In war zones, children outside schools become easy targets of abuse, exploitation and recruitment by armed forces and groups.



Time to reflect:

A simple search for images on the Internet will give many photos like the one in this story. Probably most of us have never seen children like these in real life. What would I do if these were my own children, nephews or nieces?



Let us pray:

We pray for people in power who can make a difference with their decisions and actions, that their motivations are generously, courageously and lovingly in favour of protecting the rights of children who are migrants and who live in war zones.



Inspiration:

Every war is a war against children.

Eglantyne Jebb (Co-founder of Save the Children International)



Hands on:

There are a number of ways of remotely advocating for peace and helping children in war zones. Amongst others, we can educate ourselves on the topic, participate in global campaigns by joining movements and signing petitions while supporting initiatives that promote peace-keeping dialogues.