

SHORT TALK

Imagine that your life is in danger and you have to flee your home. You don't have time to prepare or take anything with you. You must flee now. What would you do? Where would you go? How would you feel?

More than 68.5 million people worldwide have faced this situation. In fact, every minute, 31 people are forced to flee their homes to escape war, persecution, large-scale development projects, extreme poverty, or the consequences of climate change.

Children such as Shominara, who fled Burma with her family to escape the persecution suffered by the Rohingya and found refuge in Bangladesh;

Young women such as Qawthar, who had to flee war in Syria and has now been living in Lebanon for the last six years;

Women such as Kelly, an Afro-Colombian peasant who was displaced multiple times because of the armed conflict that afflicted her country for 50 years;

Men such as Amechi in Nigeria, who fled to save his life when armed forces turned their weapons on peaceful protesters asking for fair compensation from an oil company exploiting and polluting their land; and

Poor coastal communities in the Philippines who saw their homes ravaged by Super Typhoon Haiyan five years ago and faced eviction with no where to go.

This Lenten season, Development and Peace and Pope Francis invite us to reach out and encounter migrants and refugees. The Pope has reminded us that, "Faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others." Together, we are invited to open our hearts and foster a culture of encounter – a culture that requires a deep commitment to go towards others, to stop, listen and really see them, and to give a little of ourselves.

This Lenten season, we are all called upon to be fellow travelers with our sisters and brothers who have had to flee their homes and to share the journey with them. But how?

By giving generously to the Share Lent campaign. Thanks to your support, Development and Peace and its partners can continue to build a world of justice by taking action on the root causes of forced migration and by supporting the most vulnerable populations in the Global South. Together, we can support people such as Shominara, Qawthar, and Amechi.

You can also take part in a solidarity walk to help us reach our goal of walking the equivalent of the the Earth's circumference, *i.e.* 40,075 km. [If applicable] On [date] at [place], there will be a walk in our community and we hope to see you there in great numbers.

Thank you for sharing the journey with our sisters and brothers all over the world. Thank you for praying for them.