



from Garth...

“The United States Refugee Admissions Program embodies America’s commitment to protect the most vulnerable, and to stand as a beacon of liberty and refuge to the world. It’s a statement about who we are, and who we want to be. So we are going to rebuild what has been broken...” -President Biden

At the moment it’s hard to find good news, and so it’s good to see that some good news has come in about refugee admissions to the States, as President Joe Biden has raised the US cap on refugee admissions to 62,500. In a statement issued on Monday, Biden said, “The historically low number set by the previous administration of 15,000 did not reflect America’s values

as a nation that welcomes and supports refugees. It’s important to take this action today,” he added, “to remove any lingering doubt in the minds of refugees around the world who have suffered so much. We are working quickly to undo the damage of the last four years.”

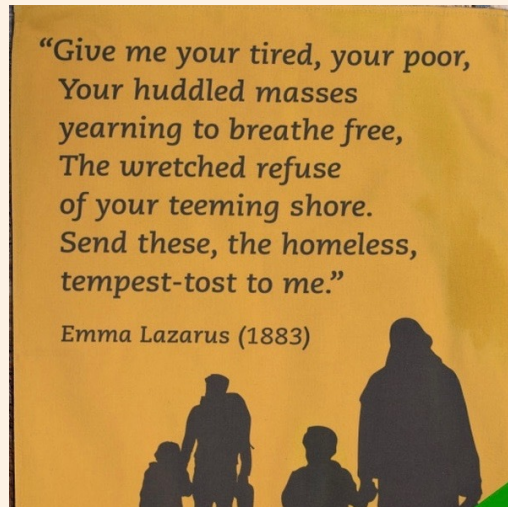
And he said he will further increase the cap to 125,000. “We are going to use every tool available to help these fully vetted refugees fleeing horrific conditions in their home countries.” Biden said it was important to lift the number to show America’s commitment to protect the most vulnerable and to stand as a beacon of liberty and refuge to the world.

Refugee resettlement agencies applauded Biden’s action. “We are absolutely thrilled and relieved for so many refugee families all across the world who look to the US for protection,” said Krish O’Mara Vig Narajah, the Head of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Tea Towel Wisdom

To me, this points America back to its significant commitment to the poor and homeless. Reflected in the Statue of Liberty, where the poet Emma Lazarus' words are posted:

**Give me your tired, your poor, your
huddled masses
Yearning to breath free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore
Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tossed, to me**



From the poem of Emma Lazarus, 1883

President Biden is signalling that he is going back to those moving words.

I was given these words on a tea towel at Christmas by Isobel my PA. And actually the tea towel is beautiful and inspiring. So I said to Isobel that I wouldn't use it, I would frame it. And she told me off and said it should be used. She thought I was trying to get out of helping with the washing up!

The previous policy of cutting down so much on refugees seemed to go strongly against these words. But with the commitment of President Biden these words come alive again.

Easter Revolution

Some lyrics from my forthcoming new album called "Easter Revolution", in fact from the song that will finish the album, "Easter Revolution - Finale", remind us of the attitude of Jesus to refugees.

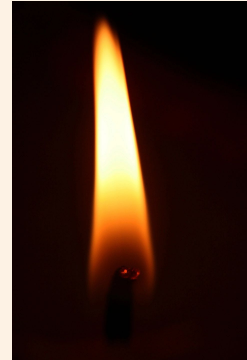
**You reach out to the forgotten and to the refugee
You're the champion of the despised
Working with Jesus in the community of love
Means loving your neighbour all of the time
Means working for justice all of the time**

**Go with peace, go with love, go with justice in your heart
Go with peace, go with love, go with justice in your heart
As a member of the Easter Revolution**

Go with peace, go with love, go with justice in your heart

Prayer of thanks for a generous spirit

Oh God we thank you for decisions like this
That lift our spirits - as they reflect generosity being
shown
To the wounded refugees of our world
We know this reflects the character of your love
And we are grateful.
You reach out to the forgotten and to the refugee
You're the champion of the despised.
May we walk in your footsteps.



May this example spread to our country,
And save us from a spirit of meanness towards refugees.

Amen

Retracting the Hand of Mercy - Bob Geldof Speaks Out

Some of you will remember that at the beginning of lockdown last year in our newsletter of March or April, I quoted three people who were reminding us to learn from this time of pandemic, and basically to love our neighbour as ourselves. Two Palestinians, Mitri Raheb and Zoughbi Zoughbi, and also Pope Francis were quoted. At this time when we see such problems in countries like India we realise the importance of generosity of spirit.

Here's part of Pope Francis' quote about Covid -

"We have realised that we are all on the same boat. All of us fragile and disoriented but at the same time important and needed, all of us are called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other."

At this time when we see such problems in countries like India we realise the importance of generosity of spirit.

It is therefore very sad that the British government has plans to slash hundreds of millions of pounds in foreign aid to countries in conflict zones around the world. We will be cutting aid to countries like Sahel, Syria, Libya, Somalia, Congo and so the story goes on. Both senior Tory and Labour MPs have

criticised these cuts, and **Bob Geldof**, as we would expect, has come out with a powerful quote about what the Prime Minister is doing.



He said, “It is a grotesque betrayal of the UK and this government’s own commitments and of failing some of the most hungry, terrified, hurt people of our world. Instead of the food and shelter and schooling and safety they were promised by Britain, they will sometime later in the year have the food snatched from their mouths, the blanket removed from the tired body, the teacher sent home and the bandage unpeeled from the wound. This is

the brave new shiny world of global Britain. This pinched, mean, small, sly, weak, pathetic act of self harm that they do. **Britain has many times been through harder, tougher, poorer times than this but it never retracted the hand of mercy to the helpless.** What is wrong with these people, they are shameful.”

Bob Geldof in an interview in Open Democracy which you can read [here](#)

Some thoughts on India from Rev Dr Jacob Devadason

In the current situation in India I thought I would ask my good friend Rev Dr **Jacob Devadason**, vicar of St. Catherine's Heald Green in Manchester, as to how things are going in his home village – a Dalit Village called Gomathimuthupuram down in Tamil Nadu, which I visited some years back (I tell the story of the visit in my book [Against the Grain](#), p 75).

These are the words he sent, which are realistic and distressing:

At our village... due to Covid school has been closed indefinitely. People and families working in different towns and cities are back to the village. But there's no daily work... daily wage earners are suffering as they find it hard to buy food and medicines. Vulnerable people have to pay huge price for oxygen and medicines. Shops are closed. Daily life is totally at a standstill. Children are suffering from lack of basic medication . We don't know how to help them in this situation.

A Prayer for India

O God we pray for India

We pray that the wealthy part of the world will be generous in sharing vaccinations and oxygen.

Especially we pray for Jacob's village and all the Dalit communities particularly at this time. Vulnerable as ever at the bottom of the caste system.
Lord in your mercy... Hear our prayer.



An important read:

"We are witnessing a crime against humanity."

Arundhati Roy in The Guardian on India's Covid crisis, you can read her article [here](#)

"They are evicting us from humanity!"

Ethnic Cleansing in Jerusalem

For those of us who've been on visits to the Holy Land, the Damascus Gate in Jerusalem is a familiar sight. (Especially when we stayed at St. George's Pilgrim Guest house – not far from there...)

It has been the scene of much aggression and racism recently. Far right Israeli settlers have marched to Damascus Gate chanting "Death to Arabs", and "Arabs out", while hurling projectiles at Palestinians who confronted them. The demonstration was organised by Jewish supremacist group Lehava. The Israeli army have been criticised for not halting the far-right group but instead attacking Palestinians, with many being injured. In the light of wide criticism the army's blockade of Damascus Gate has now been removed.

Dr Mustafa Barghouti (known to many Amos supporters) of the Palestinian National Initiative Movement said that the Palestinian youth would continue to defend their city, "The youth of Jerusalem have proven that they are protectors of their city in the face of settler facism and the occupation army. The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East, Tor Wennesland said, "I am alarmed at the recent escalation in Jerusalem and around Gaza."

A recent Palestine Solidarity Campaign zoom addressed the problem of ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem and interviewed particularly one family about how they felt with all that was happening. **One person interviewed was Mohammed El Kurd and one of the things that he said which was particularly striking was, "They aren't evicting us from our homes - they are evicting us from humanity."**

Muhammad also said, "We're living on the brink of homelessness - 1500 Palestinians face eviction from Al Bustan, Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah, because of war crimes of an occupying power". **He went on to say "All we want is to be treated like human beings, but we are victims of a system built to ethnically cleanse - it's our home, it's our land, it's our city - how would you feel? How would you feel?"**

"All we want is to be treated like human beings."

The Song 'Humans Too' expresses the same message -

***It may come as a shock, it's only known to a few,
But Palestinians are Humans too.***

You can see the film we made for *Humans Too* [on youtube here](#)

The Installation of Bishop Hosam Naoum as Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem will be on Ascension Day, the 13th May



Bishop Hosam will be installed as Archbishop in St George's Cathedral Jerusalem. Sadly a lot of people who would like to be there to support him are unable to be at the moment. This includes myself, especially as I'm a Canon of St George's and would love to be there to support Hosam. **However Hosam's Chaplain has sent a link so we can watch live [on youtube here](#) - all are invited.** It's at 12pm (2pm Jerusalem time.)

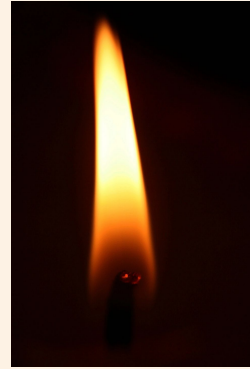
On Amos Trust journeys to the Holy Land we have met up with Hosam, since the very early days when he was up in Galilee. I think many of us will want to be praying for Hosam and as we can't be there we'll do second best thing and watch the service. Hosam has always been a remarkably helpful person in his role as Dean of the Cathedral. He's always welcomed us there and particularly assisted when the Amos Trust walkers ended their Just Walk to Jerusalem in the Cathedral a few years ago. Hosam helped myself and Naim Ateek put together the service that welcomed them to the Cathedral.

Hosam has always been a welcoming friend and we are delighted that he will be fulfilling this very important role in such a difficult time as this.

Hosam our thoughts and prayers will be with you – we will be looking in on the 13th - and you and Rafa and the family will remain in our prayers.

Prayer for Hosam

O God we commend your servant Hosam, his wife Rafa,
and their family to you
Give Hosam a sense of peace and joy at this time
As he serves the community
And may he speak with prophetic wisdom
Give him vision, wisdom and prophetic insight
Following in the footsteps of Jesus
May he reflect peace, justice, service and humanity
May he introduce people to the ways of the Prince of Peace
To the Holy Spirit of love
And the Gospel of liberation



May the beautiful eyes of a holy God
Who weeps for all His children
Bring the healing hope for his wounded ones
For the Jew and the Palestinian

So pray for the peace, pray for the peace
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem
Pray for the peace, pray for the peace
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

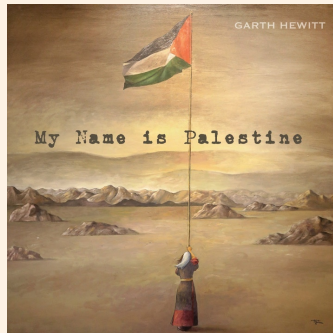
from Ten Measures of Beauty (Pray for the Peace)

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Garth Hewitt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

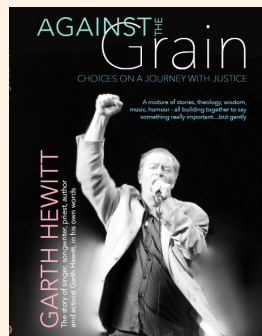
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