

DAY 23: MONDAY

Helping Hands and Hearts

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 23:22

Reflect

When a group of students, alumni, and friends of Atlantic School of Theology travelled together on a study tour in spring 2019, one of our objectives was to learn more about and reflect on human migration, and how we in the global North might respond.

We dug more deeply into the reports and statistics, but many of us felt unsure about what to do at a local level. Some of our churches were sponsoring or co-sponsoring refugees. Some of us were contributing financially to relief efforts or praying about the situations we'd heard about. But we also confessed that it was hard to know how to respond.

The global migration crisis can sometimes seem far away for many of us in Canada. It is hard to wrap our minds around the sea of millions of refugees and other displaced persons that are on the move in our era. The news reports give us only slender glimpses of this.

The Book of Leviticus is a book of religious law, and there amid the instructions about how to mark various festivals we find this passage about leaving the “gleanings of our harvest” for the strangers among us. Here we are reminded to share with those who are in need, including those who are new to our country. There is nothing at all here about being protectionist or unwelcoming.

Indeed, the Spirit seems to be speaking through scripture to remind us that it is our obligation, and our opportunity, to express generosity and kindness. God's way is a way of open-handedness, a way that calls on our common humanity to seek the thriving and prospering of everyone who is on the margins. Heart and hand go together: our goodwill combines with our good actions, thanks to God's gentle prodding and guidance.

Ponder

- How can my community be part of the solution to the refugee crisis? What do we need to learn?
- How can I personally give and love generously?

Pray

Loving God of all people,
you have invited us to be part of one human family.
Teach us to be generous and welcoming to all.
Amen.

Practise

Make a special financial donation to assist refugees.

Rob Fennell