

Lent Prayers – 6th April Week 5

‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ Mark 12:31

This week we invite you to pray for people forced to leave their homes because of the changing climate and the organisations working with them including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangladesh and the Refugees for Climate Action Network.

Extreme weather events – from floods and storms, to heatwaves and drought – are already displacing an estimated 41 people each minute (more than from conflicts and wars), and as temperatures continue to increase the world’s most vulnerable will bear the brunt. As these graphics from the World Bank Groundswell Report from 2018 illustrate, there is predicted to be a huge increase in the number of people having to leave their homes because of the climate crisis. As well as causing more extreme weather, the adverse effects of climate change induce rising sea levels, threaten food security and impact livelihoods.



In Bangladesh, where 75% of the country is below sea level, rising ocean waters have uprooted and affected 25.9 million people. Estimates suggest that, by 2050, the rising sea level will submerge another 17% of the country, displacing a further 20 million.



Those affected include Rohingya refugees, who have already fled violence in Myanmar, living in the Cox’s Bazar refugee camps. 18-year-old Mohammed Anower is part of one of the 33 Youth Environment Teams in the camp, organised by the IUCN and UNHCR, and a member of the Refugees for Climate Action Network. Each team, made up of five young women and five young men, was taught about pollution, climate change and how to analyse root causes and design projects to address them. Together with his group, Anower has cleared a stream that was blocked with rubbish, widened the channel and planted reeds and trees on the banks.

This has greatly reduced the risk of flooding to the temporary houses, allowing people to remain in the camp. He also trains his fellow refugees on flood resilience.