

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Statement of the bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland on the refugee crisis, 9/9/15

The world we share is facing an exceptional situation. Millions are fleeing war and persecution. It is a question that concerns their lives and our humanity.

This exceptional situation has awoken the desire to help others, but also worry and uncertainty. We need to be able to place ourselves in the shoes of the other. In this, the golden rule is our guiding principle. Jesus said: “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” How would I hope to be treated if I were forced to flee my home? How would prejudice, verbal abuse and threats make me feel?

According to the principle of Christian neighbourliness, people must be helped indiscriminately. A good society will pay heed to the needs of both its own citizens and of those seeking sanctuary. Assistance for those in need cannot be treated unequally on the basis of either their religion or nationality.

We greatly value the work of the authorities, parishes, organisations and private individuals in offering assistance to refugees and sanctuary to asylum seekers. We encourage parishes to continue to cooperate with the authorities and others offering assistance. Parishes can show their hospitality in the provision of suitable premises and by organising shared activities. We request that parishes take refugees into consideration when decisions about budgets and the allocation of offerings are made. It is our hope that municipalities will support without prejudice the establishment of reception centres, and that the government will act in our shared responsibility towards those now arriving in Europe and seeking asylum.

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Samuel Salmi, Bishop of Oulu
Simo Peura, Bishop of Lapua
Matti Repo, Bishop of Tampere
Seppo Häkkinen, Bishop of Mikkeli
Björn Vikström, Bishop of Porvoo
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