

Sheltering the Homeless

[by Christine Traynier 01730 624366]

Corporal works of mercy are those that tend to the bodily needs of other creatures. The standard list is given by Jesus in Matthew's Gospel Ch 25, in the famous sermon on the Last Judgment. They are also mentioned in the Book of Isaiah: to feed the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless.

Since the atrocities of the war in Ukraine, it has been heart-warming to see how many people have been carrying out these *works of mercy* to the people affected by what is happening. Most of the burden of this relief has fallen on the countries bordering Ukraine who have provided food, drink clothing and shelter to those crossing the border. Relief in many ways has also been provided from many sources in this country. The most surprising response is the thousands of people who have offered rooms in their homes to shelter the refugees. By the end of March, 32,000 applications had been received in the Government's scheme.

The refugee situation has been further compounded by the latest scheme of proposing to send some asylum seekers to Rwanda. I know we live in a country of high population density and there is only a certain number we can take, but surely, we have room for more.

We have a shortage of workers in many professions and in the past, we have accepted refugees from abroad, many of whom have become valued members of the country.

Let us be more welcoming to genuine refugees, black and white alike. At present they are not allowed to work while their claim is settled which can take up to a year. Let us allow them to work when they arrive, in jobs where we have employee shortages that suit their skills.

On the day of judgement, we can then be told, I was hungry, and you fed me ... I was homeless and you gave me shelter.

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