

EASTER UPDATE

Friends and Family Newsletter - April 2024



ARRUPE
MIGRANT
CENTER
WELCOME HOME

Easter Greetings from the AMC!

It has been a challenging year for many migrants in Lebanon. Our community members have weathered rising rents and scarcer work, fears of expanding conflict, travel restrictions, and a whole host of daily difficulties. And yet, Easter joy abounds! The joy of the resurrection was made obvious this last week here in the AMC. Our whole community gathered for the Paschal Triduum to walk with Christ through his death and resurrection. As domestic workers are often only able to leave their employers' homes for a few hours on Sunday, we have begun live-streaming all of our services, and nearly 700 members of our community joined the Easter Vigil online, bringing paschal joy even into places of confinement. Likewise, we were able to expand this year into offering Easter mass in Dowra, a neighborhood of Beirut that is closer to where many migrants and refugees live. On Easter Sunday, both the AMC and our Dowra mass were fuller than ever! Couples for Christ, Children of Mary, and the Bakhita group, faith groups led by migrants and refugees, prepared a generous meal together for the whole community to share after Mass. Looking around at those who gathered, domestic workers from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and all over Africa—from Nigeria to Kenya—refugees from Sudan and South Sudan, Lebanese families, visitors from Europe, and our local Jesuit community, the Kingdom of God never felt so close. Happy Easter from the Arrupe Migrant Center!

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Above: Easter Lunch!. Right:
Celebrating in Dowra





Peace on the (cricket) Pitch

Working with cultures from all over the world means we often discover new ways of celebrating old traditions. Beyond the usual Mass and lunch, Easter this year meant one thing for the South Asian communities at the AMC: Cricket! This Easter, Team X-Sath, whose name means “United” in Sinhala, sponsored a tournament for the whole community. In all respects, the tournament lived up to its name! While relations between India and Pakistan are known for tension, Team Eleven Brothers united men from both nations to play in the tournament together. Likewise, players from both Tamil and Sinhala ethnic groups, who fought a bitter civil war in recent memory, united on the same Sri Lankan teams. Coming together across divides, the cricketers have made a new life—together—possible at the AMC. Team Eleven Brothers played valiantly, led by their star player, Mr. Love Sing. Although they took second to the Sri Lankan Team Royals in a day of friendly competition, everyone agreed on one thing: Love was the MVP!



Left: The Eleven Brothers and Royals share the spotlight. Above: Mr. Love, the MVP.

New Legal Clinic with Jesuit University



While the AMC is a place of Easter joy for many, the reality of the cross is never far away. Migrants in Lebanon suffer under “Kafala,” a legal system that enables exploitation and keeps them vulnerable by tying their legal rights directly to their employers. Migrants facing abuse often can’t speak out, for fear of losing their papers, and those that do flee abuse become vulnerable immediately. Because of these realities, in addition to offering space for celebration, prayer, and community the AMC is forging new partnerships to make sure that migrants can reach the services they need. This week, we will be hosting our new monthly legal clinic with teams of lawyers and students from the Jesuit University of St. Joseph for free legal assistance and representation. So far, the clinic has been a great success, linking migrants with the legal help they need to live in the full dignity of their rights.