

## A SYRIAN CLC FAMILY SEEKING A NEW HOME



Syria's civil war is the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. Half the country's pre-war population, more than 11 million people, have been killed or forced to flee their homes.

Families are struggling to survive inside Syria, or making a new home in neighboring countries. Others are risking their lives on the way to Europe, hoping to find acceptance and opportunity.

In December, I was informed by a CLC friend in Lebanon, Rita El Rami, that a CLC Syrian family were refugees in Lebanon. They had expressed a desire to come to Canada and Rita asked if we could help.

I brought this matter to the attention of Ann Marie Brennan, CLC world ExCo link for North America. Anne Marie suggested that I first contact the World ExCo member from Lebanon, Najat Sayegh, to ask her if she knew of this family and would she know how to best deal with the request.

Najat answered by telling me that she knew the family and send their email address so that I could contact them personally. Following my initial contact with the father; below is what he sent. (The son, George, is missing from the photo. He will remain in Lebanon to continue his studies to be ordained as a Maronite Priest)

***“We left Aleppo-Syria more than three years ago, because we lost everything. I lost my job which is a private store of small commerce located in the old part of Aleppo where the area was taken by the rebels and burned down since the 23rd of July. Also my wife had lost her engineering office in Sheikh Maksood. Our house in Jalaa street is not safe because it is located on the border line. A big bomb fragment entered our house and we were victims of two armed attacks from terrorists Islamists in our street during the day. So we decided we should leave. We hope to have the chance to come to Canada, because there is no more possibility to live in Aleppo for now. It has become very dangerous for our lives and it is a chaos and there are no more rules. We refuse violence and racism our values and education are completely different from the current situation it is turning into. So we are looking forward to re-establishing a new peaceful life in Canada.*”**

***Sincerely in Christ: Lina, Aboud, Christa and Joanna Charabati family”*** (see photo above)

The above information was given to the CLC North American Continental Regional Team as we prepared for our March 2016 teleconference meeting. The team members addressed this issue and discussed what possible way that we, as a community, could support the Charabati family. It was suggested that we begin by sending the family photo and information to as many National CLC members by asking the question: “HOW CAN CLC HELP THIS FAMILY”?

Since that time, I would say that we have progressed significantly in obtaining relevant information on sponsoring refugees, thanks to several persons that have been directly involved in the sponsoring of Syrian Refugees. Also, several web sites with important information have been passed on, one of which is particularly important because of the Charabati family wanting to come to Montreal PQ. It’s very encouraging to know that many CLC members have immediately responded in tangible ways in assisting the Charabati family.

Several CLC members have made financial pledges. To this date, we have a total of \$4,100.00 pledged that will be deposited in the refugee account. What has been extremely helpful was the establishment of a core group ready to receive and support the family when they arrive in Montreal. Antoine and Remi Taoutel are CLC members living in Montreal, Canada. They personally know the Charabati family since they both come from Aleppo, Syria. Antoine was the past president of CLC Syria. He has informed me that there were 180 active CLC members before the onset of the civil war in Syria. Many of them are now living in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.

Antoine and Remi have continued to communicate directly with the Charabati family. They also have begun to fill out the necessary government sponsor forms. In the latest communication with Lina Charabati (Mother) she expressed her gratefulness to the CLC for the sum of \$ 3,500.00 which would be sufficient in helping them to come to Montreal. Because of their language skills (French and English), they are confident that once in Montreal they will quickly find work and be able to sustain themselves. What will also be helpful in their adjustment is an Armenian

community in Montreal. They have been extremely supportive in assisting new Syrian families in adapting to their new home.

In my latest conversation with Antoine, he told me of two other CLC Syrian families who were forced to leave Syria and have been living in the Lebanon refugee camp. They have expressed a desire to come to Canada.

Many of you are currently financially supporting other apostolic actions similar to this one and are to be commended for your generosity. This particular invitation to participate in assisting the Charabati family immigrate to Canada is extended to all CLC in North American. If you desire to be supportive of this project, you are invited to meditate on the scripture passage below. If you discern that you would like to donate financially, you can send a cheque to CLC CANADA for SYRIAN REFUGEE FUND. Your contribution will be deposited in the CLC Canada account and a tax receipt will be sent to you.

Gratefully submitted

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***Scripture for reflection: Lk 10:25-37***

*One day an authority on the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to receive eternal life?....What is written in the Law?" Jesus replied. "How do you understand it?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength and with all your mind.' And, 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' "*  
*"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do that, and you will live." But the man wanted to make himself look good. So he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Robbers attacked him. They stripped off his clothes and beat him. Then they went away, leaving him almost dead. A priest happened to be going down that same road. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came by. When he saw the man, he passed by on the other side too. But a Samaritan came to the place where the man was. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him. He went to him, poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey. He brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins. He gave them to the owner of the inn. 'Take care of him,' he said. 'When I return, I will pay you back for any extra expense you may have.'* "Which of the three do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?" The authority on the law replied, "The one who felt sorry for him." Jesus told him, "Go and do as he did."