

## “A Safe Place to Land”

(Let your tears flow...)

Have you ever experienced a spring snowstorm? Most likely the answer is yes! Well, it is Minnesota. And we always get a brief glimpse of 70 degree temperatures, only to have it followed by an unexpected and unwelcome blizzard. If you are a visitor to our state in spring, you will inevitably hear someone say, “I feel like crying.”

I am a music lover. I start the day dancing in my kitchen and singing in the shower. You never see me leaving for the day without earbuds around my neck ready to savor a song. Uplifting music makes me walk taller, smile brighter, and breathe deeper—even during a late April snowstorm.

But, today the tears are flowing...and it is not because of an unexpected weather forecast. I am listening to a song entitled, “*A Safe Place to Land*” by Sara Bareilles with John Legend. While the song is pensive and reflective, it has particularly cut to my core. As I listen, I visualize the faces of refugee and immigrant children staring back at me.

I see their tears streaming down weathered cheeks, I feel their paralyzing fear, and I experience their desperation as they hope for a safe place to land.

Today’s choice of music has made the tears flow. And that is ok. Sometimes, I need to be reminded of those families and children I’ve cared for as a past director for the refugee program; prior to accepting my storytelling—relationship building—fundraising efforts as Director of Advancement for Catholic Charities.

As the lyrics echo in my earbuds, I am feeling a connection with those who I’ve come to cherish who have experienced indescribable challenges and suffering. I see the faces of those refugees who have arrived under our auspices. I see families who have fled countries because they fear for their children’s lives. I see the woman I cared for who arrived with no eyes, men arriving disfigured due to bomb explosions, children who disembark planes without limbs and with blown eardrums. I see those arriving with malnutrition and rotten teeth.



I hear the voices of those refugees telling me they were so desperate to reach a host country and safe place to land that they climbed into overloaded boats. I hear them tell me vividly how family and friends were lost in wild waters due to capsizing.



But, as I close my eyes and listen to the words of this song, perhaps the saddest memory is that of children arriving with tears in their eyes. I was met with young eyes that did not sparkle; eyes that were filled with fear and lacked hope.

Sara Bareilles calls us to imagine for a moment what it feels like to be in a situation comparable to being in a building going up in flames? You are told to just stand still...the window is open, and your leap of faith is that maybe, just maybe, someone will catch you and give you a safe place to land.

She challenges you and me to be the hand of a hopeful stranger and while we may be a little scared... to be brave enough to be a light in the dark of this danger. Could that danger be the mentality of indifference—an “out of sight/out of mind feeling” that allows us to make excuses when it comes to the needs of refugees and immigrants?

I ask you to simply take 4:42 minutes to listen to the song, “*A Safe Place to Land*” on You Tube today. Allow your tears to flow. As you listen, see the faces of refugees and immigrants needing a safe place to land.

While those tears stream down our cheeks may it remind you and me that made in God’s image and likeness, *every* human life has dignity and deserves a safe place to land—no exceptions!

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