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## **World Refugee Day: Irish Bishops, “health, housing and education. Welcome to prevent racism”**

“Leaving people to sleep in tents or on the streets is cruelty before our eyes, it is not an option in a country that is one of the richest in the world. We can do so much better”. This is written in the message that the Irish Bishops have written to celebrate the World Refugee Day that takes place today and acts as a reminder of “our responsibility to care for those who travel to Ireland seeking safety, shelter and dignity.” One hundred thousand refugees seem to have arrived in the country since 24 February 2022; “in recent times this issue has become a very sensitive one and it requires thought, consultation, planning and hard work”. The Bishops thank the parish and religious communities for their great efforts to welcome the refugees and point to the fact the Government announced it is now in a position to offer accommodation to all International Protection applicants though “we all have a responsibility to hold those in authority to account”, so that “they are prepared to support new arrivals in terms of health and medical care as well as with their accommodation and education needs”, in partnership and in consultation with the local communities. For everyone, the challenge is avoiding that “extremist views and actions can come to the fore causing fear and racism and undermining our culture of welcome”. In addition, the Bishops point out, “as a people we know deeply within ourselves what it is like to have to leave one's homeland and seek shelter and a better life”.

Valentina Bombelli