

"Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World" (Pope Francis)

JANUARY 19, 2014

“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity.

They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more. The sheer number of people migrating from one continent to another, or shifting places within their own countries and geographical areas, is striking. Contemporary movements of migration represent the largest movement of individuals, if not of peoples, in history. As the Church accompanies migrants and refugees on their journey, she seeks to understand the causes of migration, but she also works to overcome its negative effects, and to maximize its positive influence on the communities of origin, transit and destination.”

(Pope Francis: World Day of Migrants and Refugees)

CALL TO PRAYER:

Our faith challenges us to a journey, an ongoing conversion of the heart.

Our Scriptures are filled with such journey stories: Abraham brings his family to a new land as part of a new covenant, Moses leads his people through the desert back to the Promised Land, Mary and Joseph must travel to Bethlehem and later flee to Egypt. Jesus spends his ministry journeying through Palestine, often “with no place to lay his head.”

Today, we, too, are called to offer our outstretched hands and hearts to those who migrate from their homes and from loved ones because of the violence of conflict and poverty.

LET US PRAY:

Holy God,

You are a God on the move.
You move in the world and in our lives.
You shape and direct Creation, and us.

Your people have always been on the move.
Moses led your people out of slavery in Egypt.
The Holy Family fled to Egypt as refugees.



Today, people continue to move.
War, poverty, oppression and violence drive people from home and country.

We pray that today's refugees, forced migrants, and internally displaced people may know you are always with them in and through us.

Holy, moving God, hear our prayer
for the sake of your own uprooted son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Leviticus 19: 33-34

“When aliens settle with you in your land, you shall not oppress them. They shall be treated as native-born among you, and you shall love them as people like yourselves, because you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

REFLECTION: Let us pause for a few minutes.

Consider the reasons that make people leave their country, relatives, homes, jobs... Remember the faces and names you know and place them before God.

READING: “World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)” - *Pope Francis*

“Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ!

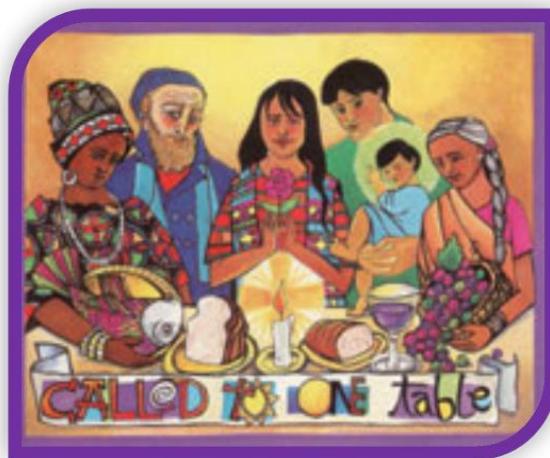
We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community. Migration can offer possibilities for a new evangelization, open vistas for the growth of a new humanity foreshadowed in the paschal mystery: a humanity for which every foreign country is a homeland and every homeland is a foreign country.”

Time for Quiet Reflection: Music is appropriate, either instrumental or vocal.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- Recall a moment of encounter with a migrant(s), refugee(s) and immigrant(s). How was God speaking to you in this encounter?
- Recall a moment where you felt lost or “in a strange land”? Who/What helped you find your way?
- Today, how will you/your community offer an outstretched hand of welcome?

SHARING/PETITIONS: Each one is invited to a time of faith sharing.



OUR FATHER

SOLIDARITY/SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

- Read the text of Pope Francis for World Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees:
www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day_en.html
- Join with others at St. Paul's Basilica (83 Power St.)
on Sunday, January 19, 2014 at 3:00 pm
to celebrate Mass as the Universal Church
- Learn more about Human Slavery and Trafficking www.nwoprayer.org
- Keep migrants, refugees and those who provide support to them in your daily prayers
- Sponsor a refugee: Office for Refugees Archdiocese of Toronto at (416) 645-0827



CONCLUDING PRAYER:

Fleeing from Herod,
Mary and Joseph took the child Jesus
on a difficult journey to a foreign land
never doubting that God was with them.

To Jesus we entrust
all mothers, fathers, children
who are today's "Holy Family,"
migrating in hope, in fear,
longing for peace and a new home.

May they find their journey's end
as we open ourselves to their stories,
their needs, their hopes.

Together may we experience
fraternal solidarity, warmth of friendship
and recognize one another as Neighbour.

This we ask in the name of Jesus,
our Lord and our Brother. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

