



the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

*"Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us:
The Response of the Gospel of Mercy" (Pope Francis)*

JANUARY 17, 2016

“How can we ensure that integration [*of migrants and refugees*] will become mutual enrichment, open up positive perspectives to communities, and prevent the danger of discrimination, racism, extreme nationalism or xenophobia? . . . Faced with these issues, how can the Church fail to be inspired by the example and words of Jesus Christ? The answer of the Gospel is MERCY . . . Mercy nourishes and strengthens solidarity towards others as a necessary response to God’s gracious love . . . Each of us is responsible for his or her neighbour: we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. Concern for fostering good relationships with others and the ability to overcome prejudice and fear are essential ingredients for promoting the culture of encounter, in which we are not only prepared to give, but also to receive from others.

Hospitality, in fact, grows from both giving and receiving.”

(Pope Francis: World Day of Migrants and Refugees)

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CALL TO PRAYER:

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

Scripture is filled with such journey stories: Abram and Sarai bring their 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, families, homes, jobs...
Remember the faces and names you know and place them before God.

READING: “World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2016)” - *Pope Francis*

“The tragic stories of millions of men and women daily confront the international community as a result of the outbreak of unacceptable humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. Indifference and silence lead to complicity whenever we stand by as people are dying of suffocation, starvation, violence and shipwreck. Whether large or small in scale, these are always tragedies, even when a single human life is lost . . . Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unjust distribution of the planet’s resources which are meant to be equitably shared by all.”

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

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- o Recall a moment where you felt lost or “in a strange land”?
Who/What helped you find your way?
- o How is God gently nudging, even urging, you/your local community to offer hospitality to a migrant and/or refugee?
- o What is one action of solidarity that you/your local community will undertake?

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



OUR FATHER

SOLIDARITY/SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

- o Read the text of Pope Francis for World Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees: http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/10/01/2016_message_for_world_day_of_migrants_and_refugees/1176013
- o Join with others at St. Paul's Basilica (83 Power St.) on Sunday, January 17, 2016 at 3:00 pm to celebrate Mass as the Universal Church.
- o Become a member of the refugee sponsorship group of your religious congregation or in your local parish.
- o Keep migrants, refugees and those who provide support to them in your daily prayers.



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

