



## the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

*“Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless” (Pope Francis)*

JANUARY 15, 2017

“Migration today is not a phenomenon limited to some areas of the planet.

It affects all continents and is growing into a tragic situation of global proportions. Not only does this concern those looking for dignified work or better living conditions, but also men and women, the elderly and children, who are forced to leave their homes in the hope of finding safety, peace and security. Children are the first among those to pay the heavy toll of emigration, almost always caused by violence, poverty, environmental conditions, as well as the negative aspects of globalization. They constitute the most vulnerable group, because as they face the life ahead of them, they are invisible and voiceless: their precarious situation deprives them of documentation, hiding them from the world’s eyes; the absence of adults to accompany them prevents their voices from being raised and heard. In this way, migrant children easily end up at the lowest levels of human degradation, where illegality and violence destroy the future of too many innocents, while the network of child abuse is difficult to break up.”

*(Pope Francis: World Day of Migrants and Refugees)*

Becoming Neighbours

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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:** “Can consumer people be Christmas people?” *Ilia Delio*, OSF

“Christmastime should be an awakening of consciousness that *all* is a gift freely given and that our task is to receive in poverty of spirit and give thanks. The lowliness of Christ's birth shows us where the gift of divinity is to be found: in the poor, the humble, the forgotten, the weak, the simple, the laborer, the migrant, the unwed, the old, the dumb ox and smelly sheep.--- Life in God is about living in the gift of life, and to receive graciously is to live in the flow of life abundant.” [Click Here to Read Full Article](#)

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.
- o CENTER OF CONCERN: “*The Message of World Day of Migrants and Refugees*”  
See: <http://bit.ly/2h6HVB8>
- o Join with others at St. Luke’s Parish (Thornhill) on Sun., Jan. 15, 2017 at 12:15 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.
- o Attend the movie “*LION*” with friends ([click here for trailer](#))



## 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.

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

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.

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

