

Journeying Together



PARISH MIGRATION RESOURCE PACK

Christmas 2013 and World Migrant Sunday 19th January 2014



Message from Bishop John Kirby and Bishop Raymond Field

A Phobal Dé,

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas and World Migrant and Refugee Sunday, 19 January 2014, it is important that we come together to remember and pray for all those who have travelled far from their homeland in search of a better life.

Pope Francis, who has made the defence of the poor and vulnerable a cornerstone of his papacy, said in a message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees that there should be a change in attitude towards migrants.

He urges countries to welcome and respect migrants and not treat them as "pawns on the chess-board 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."

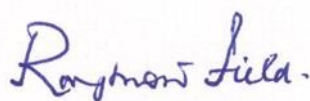
A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalisation - all typical of a throwaway culture - towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world," he said in the message.

Here in Ireland, this is a daily reality witnessed in all our parishes, as large numbers of Irish people continue to travel abroad to seek out new opportunities. While their departure creates a void in Irish families and in parish communities, our communities, villages and towns have also become home to thousands of non-Irish residents from all over the world.

We hope this Resource Pack will assist you in raising awareness of the challenges facing migrants and in showing solidarity with those who have been affected by migration, both those leaving our shores in the hope of making a new life for themselves overseas and those joining us to begin their new lives in Ireland.

We encourage you to make use of these resources in reaching out to the people of your parish in relation to this important issue. If the Council for Emigrants and Council for Immigrants can be of any assistance to you in your ministry please contact our offices in Maynooth. We also encourage you to visit our websites: www.catholicbishops.ie/emigrants and www.councilforimmigrants.ie

Críost linn.



Bishop John Kirby
Chair
Council for Emigrants

Bishop Raymond Field
Chair
Council for Immigrants

Migration Statistics

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) report that **The Republic of Ireland** is now home to over 544,000 non-Irish nationals representing 199 different nations. 282,799 declared themselves Catholic.

The fastest growing groups of non-Irish nationalities living in the Republic of Ireland according to the CSO are Romanian (up 110%); Indian (up 91%), Polish (up 83%), Latvian (up 43%) and Lithuanian (up 40%). (CSO figures)

In the latest CSO census (2011), Dublin City (88,038), Fingal (49,517) and Cork County (42,886) had the highest number of non-Irish nationals living in their counties while Leitrim (3,703) and Longford (5,477) had the lowest numbers. Galway city was the most multi-cultural with 19.4% of its residents recorded as non-Irish.

Between 2004 and 2011, over half (55.2%) of 42,525 registered migrant works in **Northern Ireland** were from Poland, followed by Lithuania (18.8%) and Slovakia (13.3%). Nearly two-thirds (62%) were male and just over three-quarters (77%) were aged 18 - 34 years. (Northern Irish Assembly 2012)

Figures released by the Central Statistics Office in August 2013 estimate that in the 12 months to April 2013 overall emigration increased to 89,000 and 57% (50,900) of those who emigrated were Irish nationals.

During this period 21,900 people emigrated to the UK; 6,200 emigrated to the US; 25,700 emigrated to the EU; 15,400 emigrated to Australia; 5,300 emigrated to Canada; and 14,400 emigrated to the 'Rest of World'.

Prayers for Migrants

Mary Most Holy, you, together with St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, experienced the suffering of exile.

You were forced to flee to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod.

Today we entrust the men, women and children who live as migrants and refugees to your maternal protection.

Grant us the grace to welcome them with Christian hospitality, so that these brothers and sisters of ours may find acceptance and understanding on their journey.

Teach us to recognise you Son

In the migrant who labours to bring food to our table,

In the refugee seeking protection from persecution, war and famine

In the woman and child who are victims of human trafficking

In the asylum seeker imprisoned for fleeing without documents

May all those who are far from their place of birth find in the Church a home where no one is a stranger.

We ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus our Lord.

Amen

Loving God,

We pray for those whom we love,

But who are absent from us.

Keep them safe from all harm, evil, and danger.

Bless them with peace, laughter

Wisdom, love and joy.

Grant that we may be reunited

In the fullness of love;

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.

Prayer for the Journey

Lord Jesus, we come to you as migrants and pilgrims, passing briefly through this world, as we journey to our true home in heaven.

Show us the Way.

You were once a migrant carried by Mary your mother and Joseph when you fled into Egypt. Guide us along safe paths, protect us from evil, and free us from all fear.

Show us the Way.

Teach us to welcome the strangers among us – immigrants, migrants, refugees, people on the move – all sisters and brothers on the journey.

Show us the Way

Help us to seek justice for the oppressed, to bring comfort to the afflicted, and to offer hope and healing to all those we meet on the journey.

Show us the Way

Help us to recognise that the Christian path is the way of justice and peace. Strengthen us to follow this path.

Show us the Way.

Lord Jesus,

Who in the very first days of your earthly life were compelled together with your Mother Mary and your Father Joseph to flee your native land and seek refuge in Egypt, knowing the discomfort of emigrants.

Look kindly upon our brothers and sisters who are far from their native soil, from friends and family, and are struggling to come to terms with new life in a foreign land.

Guide them on their journey, stay close to them in their loneliness and comfort the family and friends they have left behind.

We pray Lord that we may be able to embrace them once more, at home or abroad, and for those that pass from this life, we pray that we may meet once more in your heavenly kingdom.

Amen.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (2014)

Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Our societies are experiencing, in an unprecedented way, processes of mutual interdependence and interaction on the global level. While not lacking problematic or negative elements, these processes are aimed at improving the living conditions of the human family, not only economically, but politically and culturally as well. Each individual is a part of humanity and, with the entire family of peoples, shares the hope of a better future. This consideration inspired the theme I have chosen for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees this year: *Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World*.

In our changing world, the growing phenomenon of human mobility emerges, to use the words of Pope Benedict XVI, as a “sign of the times” (cf. [Message for the 2006 World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#)). While it is true that migrations often reveal failures and shortcomings on the part of States and the international community, they also point to the aspiration of humanity to enjoy a unity marked by respect for differences, by attitudes of acceptance and hospitality which enable an equitable sharing of the world’s goods, and by the protection and the advancement of the dignity and centrality of each human being.

From the Christian standpoint, the reality of migration, like other human realities, points to the tension between the beauty of creation, marked by Grace and the Redemption, and the mystery of sin. Solidarity, acceptance, and signs of fraternity and understanding exist side by side with rejection, discrimination, trafficking and exploitation, suffering and death. Particularly disturbing are those situations where migration is not only involuntary, but actually set in motion by various forms of human trafficking and enslavement. Nowadays, “slave labour” is common coin! Yet despite the problems, risks and difficulties to be faced, great numbers of migrants and refugees continue to be inspired by confidence and hope; in their hearts they long for a better future, not only for themselves but for their families and those closest to them.

What is involved in the creation of “a better world”? The expression does not allude naively to abstract notions or unattainable ideals; rather, it aims at an authentic and integral development, at efforts to provide dignified living conditions for everyone, at finding just responses to the needs of individuals and families, and at ensuring that God’s gift of creation is respected, safeguarded and cultivated. The Venerable Paul VI described the aspirations of people today in this way: “to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases and steady employment... to exercise greater personal responsibility; to do more, to learn more, and have more, in order to be more” ([Populorum Progressio](#), 6).

Our hearts do desire something “more”. Beyond greater knowledge or possessions, they want to “be” more. Development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone, often attained without a thought for the poor and the vulnerable. A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; if human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; if no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger (cf. *Mt 25:31-46*); if we can prove capable of leaving behind a throwaway culture and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.

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.

While encouraging the development of a better world, we cannot remain silent about the scandal of poverty in its various forms. Violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups: these are some of the chief elements of poverty which need to be overcome. Often these are precisely the elements which mark migratory movements, thus linking migration to poverty. Fleeing from situations of extreme poverty or persecution in the hope of a better future, or simply to save their own lives, millions of persons choose to migrate. Despite their hopes and expectations, they often encounter mistrust, rejection and exclusion, to say nothing of tragedies and disasters which offend their human dignity.

The reality of migration, given its new dimensions in our age of globalization, needs to be approached and managed in a new, equitable and effective manner; more than anything, this calls for international cooperation and a spirit of profound solidarity and compassion. Cooperation at different levels is critical, including the broad adoption of policies and rules aimed at protecting and promoting the human person. Pope Benedict XVI sketched the parameters of such policies, stating that they “should set out from close collaboration between the migrants’ countries of origin and their countries of destination; they should be accompanied by adequate international norms able to coordinate different legislative systems with a view to safeguarding the needs and rights of individual migrants and their families, and at the same time, those of the host countries” ([Caritas in Veritate, 62](#)). Working together for a better world requires that countries help one another, in a spirit of willingness and trust, without raising insurmountable barriers. A good synergy can be a source of encouragement to government leaders as they confront socioeconomic imbalances and an unregulated globalization, which are among some of the causes of migration movements in which individuals are more victims than protagonists. No country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration.

It must also be emphasized that such cooperation begins with the efforts of each country to create better economic and social conditions at home, so that emigration will not be the only option left for those who seek peace, justice, security and full respect of their human dignity. The creation of opportunities for employment in the local economies will also avoid the separation of families and ensure that individuals and groups enjoy conditions of stability and serenity.

Finally, in considering the situation of migrants and refugees, I would point to yet another element in building a better world, namely, the elimination of prejudices and presuppositions in the approach to migration. Not infrequently, the arrival of migrants, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees gives rise to suspicion and hostility. There is a fear that society will become less secure, that identity and culture will be lost, that competition for jobs will become stiffer and even that criminal activity will increase. The communications media have a role of great responsibility in this regard: it is up to them, in fact, to break down stereotypes and to offer correct information in reporting the errors of a few as well as the honesty, rectitude and goodness of the majority. A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world. The communications media are themselves called to embrace this “conversion of attitudes” and to promote this change in the way migrants and refugees are treated.

I think of how even the Holy Family of Nazareth experienced initial rejection: Mary “gave birth to her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (*Lk 2:7*). Jesus, Mary and Joseph knew what it meant to leave their own country and become migrants: threatened by Herod’s lust for power, they were forced to take flight and seek refuge in Egypt (cf. *Mt 2:13-14*). But the maternal heart of Mary and the compassionate heart of Joseph, the Protector of the Holy Family, never doubted that God would always be with them. Through their intercession, may that same firm certainty dwell in the heart of every migrant and refugee.

The Church, responding to Christ’s command to “go and make disciples of all nations”, is called to be the People of God which embraces all peoples and brings to them the proclamation of the Gospel, for the face of each person bears the mark of the face of Christ! Here we find the deepest foundation of the dignity of the human person, which must always be respected and safeguarded. It is less the criteria of efficiency, productivity, social class, or ethnic or religious belonging which ground that personal dignity, so much as the fact of being created in God’s own image and likeness (cf. *Gen 1:26-27*) and, even more so, being children of God. 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.

Dear migrants and refugees! Never lose the hope that you too are facing a more secure future, that on your journey you will encounter an outstretched hand, and that you can experience fraternal solidarity and the warmth of friendship! To all of you, and to those who have devoted their lives and their efforts to helping you, I give the assurance of my prayers and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 5 August 2013 **FRANCIS**

Prayers of the Faithful

Introduction (by the Presider)

In communion with Christ and with one another we pray:

Intercessions

1. For our community, gathered here today to celebrate our unity under the Lord and his mother, Mary, that we may come to greater understanding and acceptance of our differences.
Lord, hear us.
2. For those in authority throughout the world, that they would promote peace and justice and work together for the common good.
Lord, hear us.
3. For emigrants and immigrants of our parish, that they may find support and care within the Church and the communities in which they live.
Lord, hear us.
4. For those we love who are overseas this Christmas, give them strength to face their challenges and look kindly on those who are no longer in contact with their family.
Lord, hear us.
5. Lord, at this very moment there are millions of displaced people in the world. We pray for those who have been forced from their homes and separated from their families, especially due to wars and violence. We pray for those living in refugee camps and for those who care for them. May they find safety and peace.
Lord, hear us.
6. We pray for all who are gathered here. May we through our actions and examples in our lives contribute to the building of a better world. May we reject bigotry, racism and discrimination. Instead may we show understanding, may we welcome the stranger and like the Good Samaritan, may we show love for our neighbour even if they are different than we are.
Lord, hear us.
7. For all who have died, especially those who have died far from home, may they enjoy the eternal happiness of heaven.
Lord, hear us.

Conclusion

Lord God, in faith we pray to you. Be near to us as we pray, and be close to us as we work in your service. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Christmas 2013

Suggested Homily Notes

People move because they either want to or they have to. Whether people are getting out of bed, going to the shops or traversing borders, they are doing so because they either want to and or they have to. In the world of migration, there are those who *have* to travel. At Christmas we reflect on the life of those who *have* go to another city to get their paper work in order. We see them set off on a donkey and they travel to a town called Bethlehem. On another occasion in their life they *want* to make a future for their young child so they set up home in a town called Nazareth and there they watch their child grow in wisdom, age, and stature.

To *have* to travel is poverty. To *have* to leave somewhere you love because staying means you cannot be who God intended you to be is a most abject poverty. Irish history resonates with stories of this form of poverty. John B. Keane describes boarding the boat in Dun Laoghaire with his fellow country men and women;

“All around us as we left Dun Laoghaire, there was drunkenness. The younger men were drunk - not violently so but tragically so, as I was, to forget the dreadful loneliness of having to leave home. Underneath it all was the heartbreaking frightful anguish of separation. It would be a waste of time for me to launch into a description of what went on. A person has to be part of it to feel it.”¹

He, and others like him, were forced to travel because there was nothing for them in their home place; they could no longer be who God intended them to be; they had to go. The luxury we call choice was not theirs. John B. was in his early twenties. Today, many his age and younger, make hazardous journeys across the globe; not because they *want* to but because they *have* to. Some commentators dip the bitter taste of emigration into sugar. Their narrative is coated in the language of opportunity and adventure as they attempt to make their stories digestible; distracting from the many hearts that are broken.

Ireland is not alone in this. Across the world and across many borders there are stories of lives laden with tragedy and poverty. Ahmed Omar Isaak tells of one occasion when he journeyed from his home to his new destination;

“We were 55 Somalis in an inflatable boat. They just gave us a compass and a GPS and told us which direction to go...around 160 km from Tripoli, the boat started taking on water...but no one came to rescue us...some women were pregnant and vomiting.”²

Ahmed had to leave the place he called home. Given the choice he would not have left, but

conflict drove him away. As he said quite poignantly, 'I never dreamed I would end up in the sea'.

Let us be in no doubt that this is the world we have created. Some applaud the global economic advances of the last decades. However, there is a downside to our increasingly globalised world. The upside of this world benefits the few; the downside is experienced by the many. The desire for Empire and power by the Romans at the time of Jesus created a downside for a humble couple about to give birth to their first child; similarly our globalising world, which is crazy for power and control, is leaving many people struggling on the downside of life.

There are privileged people, who, from their desk in London, Dublin, Hong Kong or New York, can, at the click of a mouse, pursue streams of money. There are others who work in squalid conditions, often illegal or undocumented, who pay a commission when they send a few euros home at the end of their working week. If those who clicked the mouse on the vast amounts of money that traverse the world paid the same taxes and levies on their transactions as those who send their hard earned money home to their families, the revenue stream from these taxes would go a long way towards alleviating poverty and debt.

In summary, Pope Francis tells us in his *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014)*³ that "the reality of migration...points to the tension between the beauty of creation...and the mystery of sin". We must now follow the Holy Father's invitation to see the migrant as a prophetic voice of our time. He continues, "they [the migrant] 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".

These are challenging words for us. These challenges may become more acute when Pope Francis tells us that "migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved". However difficult these words appear, they take on a vastly different context and significance when we apply them to the young couple with child travelling to Bethlehem a little over two thousand years ago

Fr Alan Hilliard

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Board Member of the Irish Episcopal Council for Emigrants**

¹ Keane, John B. (1964) *Self Portrait*, Cork: Irish Book Centre.

² <http://m.irinnews.org/report/99097/ahmed-omar-isaak-somali-migrant-i-never-dreamed-i-would-end-up-in-the-sea#.UoNXGjVFAdV> [Accessed 11/11/2013]

³ This year the Church marks the 100th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on Sunday, January 19th 2014. The theme for this year is 'Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World'.

World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Suggested Homily Notes

19 January 2014

Even though the words of today's first reading were written long before the coming of Christ they sum up what being a Christian is all about. The prophet Isaiah said: *"Now the Lord has spoken - He who formed me as his servant from the womb."* Being Christian means serving God. Each of us is called to be a light, an example to each other. Every day we are called to serve God by saying, as we did in the Psalm, *"Here I am Lord, I come to do your will"*.

Today is Migrant Sunday and Refugee Sunday - we remember and pray for those who have had to leave their countries, their homes and their families - not an easy thing to do. We immediately think of our own Irish migrants who have been forced to seek work abroad due to the current economic crises. But Migrant Sunday is a moment for us to think - and pray - for all migrants, no matter where they come from.

Migration is a sad and painful reality for millions of people. Most of them have no choice but to move away from wars - what prevents them living their lives in peace or from fulfilling their God given potential.

Migration entails many difficulties - whether it is for people who have come to live here in Ireland or, as it is more often the case now, for people who have to leave Ireland to look for work abroad. These difficulties involve not only the migrants themselves but also the family and friends left behind. Speaking on World Migrant Sunday a few years ago Pope Benedict XVI summed up the anxieties, hopes and prayers of every mother, father of an absent son or daughter when he said:

"I turn my thoughts to those who are far from their homeland and from their family, and I hope that on their way they will always meet friendly faces and welcoming hearts that can sustain them in the difficulties of daily life."

We responded to our Psalm today by saying: Here I am Lord, I come to do your will. What does God want us to do - what does being Christian in a country that is now a place where people from many countries and cultures live mean? The answer to this is simple - we treat them the same way we would like our own children to be treated. We should, in the words of Pope Benedict, be the *"friendly faces and welcoming hearts, trying to sustain each other in the difficulties of daily life"*.

These words reflect what the Gospel and the Church teach and they apply not only to the people who receive migrants in their country but also to migrants themselves. We all are called - migrant and native - called to serve him no matter where we are from, and we are called to serve him in the time and place in which we find ourselves, whether here in Ireland, Australia or wherever.

Whether we are at home or in a foreign land we should live in peace and harmony with all, respecting each other's human rights and dignity no matter our culture, colour or beliefs. For us as Christians this is not just about being nice - it is part and parcel of our faith - something which we are called by God to do. This is made abundantly clear again and again in the Bible and in Church teaching.

Ten years ago Pope John Paul II published a document entitled "The Love of God for Migrants". This summed all that the Scriptures and the Church has to say and teach about Migrants and about how they should be received. It says:

"In migrants the Church has always contemplated the image of Christ who said, "I was a stranger and you made me welcome" (Mt 25:35). It goes on to say: "In the foreigner a Christian sees not simply a neighbour, but the face of Christ Himself, who was born in a manger and fled into Egypt, where he was a foreigner."

The first official visit that Pope Francis undertook was to visit a Refugee Centre on an Island off the coast of Italy. Two months later he visited another refugee centre in Rome. During these visits Pope Francis called Christians to a "reawakening of consciences" to counter the "indifference" shown to migrants.

In the Gospel today we are told about how John the Baptist met Jesus and immediately recognised who he truly was. Today, in Ireland part of our saying - Here I am Lord, I come to do you will - is to be like John the Baptist and to recognise the face of Christ in the migrants we meet. Today we also hope and pray that those who have left our shores to live in New York, Sydney or Ontario will be seen in the same way.

There is no place for racism, bigotry or hatred in our faith - these are things we must challenge and reject in ourselves, in our children and in our community. We pray that we may never be party to any of these and we pray that our children, our brothers and sisters who are far from home may not experience them.

Amen.

Mr. Gerry Forde
SMA Justice and Peace Office, Cork
Board Member of the Irish Bishops' Council for Immigrants

Parish Actions

Tips for Remembering Migrants at Christmas and for celebrating the World Day for Refugees and Migrants.

In Your Parish:

- Invite people to bring forward the names of family members who have emigrated and invite new members of your parish to bring forward the names of family members they have left behind in their home country. Leave these names in the sanctuary area and include them in prayers at Mass.
- Have a map of the world in the church and invite people to stick a pin with a name flag on the spot where their loved one is or where they have come from.
- Ask people to write the names of loved ones they are separated from this Christmas in a book and place this book in the sanctuary to be remembered over Christmas.
- Organise a migrant coffee morning where families affected by emigration can come together with migrants in the parish to share a cup of coffee and discuss their experiences.
- World Migrant Sunday and parishioners National Holidays or Patron Saint Feast Days are an opportunity for parishes to celebrate diversity. Do this by using hymns and prayers from the languages of your congregation and by asking a member of your parish to talk about their journey to live in Ireland.
- It is also an opportunity to highlight the services provided to refugees and migrants. Do this by inviting people who work as volunteers to resettle refugees and migrants, for example through Refugee Services, to come and discuss their work.



The Good Shepherd Parish, Doughiska, Co. Galway

In Your Home:

- Place a framed picture of family members you are separated from on a mantelpiece or shelf in the living room. Place a candle beside the picture and keep that candle lit over Christmas.
- Keep a journal over Christmas. Ask family members to write in this, including children and any visitors who drop in. Send it to your loved ones after Christmas.
- Remain in contact with loved ones overseas as much as possible by phone and Skype.
- Keep a lit candle in your front window. Lighting a candle in the window is an ancient Irish Christmas ritual during which prayers are said for those who are not present. Traditionally it was believed that the candle would light the way for Mary and Joseph as they sought shelter on Christmas Eve. The candle can remain lit over Christmas until after The Epiphany of the Lord on the 6th of January.



Reflection

Don't Call me a Stranger

Don't call me a stranger;
I need to feel at home;
Especially when loneliness cools my heart.

Don't call me a stranger;
The colour of my passport is different;
But the colour of our blood is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
The language I speak sounds different;
But the feelings it expresses are the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I toil and struggle in your land;
And the sweat on our brows is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
Borders, we created them;
And the separation that results is the same.

Don't call me a stranger;
I am just your friend;
But you do not know me yet.

Don't call me a stranger;
We cry for justice and peace in different ways;
But our God is the same.



Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus, 1995 (Abridged version)



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