

**Irish Episcopal Council for Immigrants
(IECI)**

**World Day for Migrants and Refugees
2010**

Theme: “Minor Migrants and Refugees”



17th January 2010

Parish Resource Kit

World Day for Migrants and Refugees -2010

“Minor migrants and refugees”

***“Minor migrants and refugees”* is the theme chosen by the Holy Father for the ninety-sixth World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which is due to be celebrated on 17 January 2010.**

The IECI World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2010 Parish Resource kit contains:

- 1. Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI for the 96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2010). Theme: *“Minor migrants and refugees”***
- 2. A poster for display in your church/school, highlighting World Day for Migrants and Refugee Sunday 2010.**
- 3. Suggestions for Parish Liturgies on the World Day for Migrants and Refugees**
- 4. Parish Bulletin Insert**
- 5. Prayers for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees**

1.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI FOR THE 96th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (2010)

Theme: Minor migrants and refugees

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees once again gives me the opportunity to express the Church's constant concern for those who, in different ways, experience a life of emigration. This is a phenomenon which, as I wrote in the Encyclical [*Caritas in Veritate*](#), upsets us due to the number of people involved and the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises on account of the dramatic challenges it poses to both national and international communities. The migrant is a human person who possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance (cf. [n. 62](#)).

This year's theme – “Minor migrants and refugees” – touches an aspect that Christians view with great attention, remembering the warning of Christ who at the Last Judgement will consider as directed to himself everything that has been done or denied “to one of the least of these” (cf. Mt 25:40, 45). And how can one fail to consider migrant and refugee minors as also being among the “least”? As a child, Jesus himself experienced migration for, as the Gospel recounts, in order to flee the threats of Herod, he had to seek refuge in Egypt together with Joseph and Mary (cf. Mt 2:14).

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that the best interests of the minor shall always be safeguarded (cf. Art. 3, 1), recognizing his or her fundamental human rights as equal to the rights of adults, unfortunately this does not always happen in practice.

Although there is increasing public awareness of the need for immediate and incisive action to protect minors, nevertheless, many are left to themselves and, in various ways, face the risk of exploitation. My venerable Predecessor, [John Paul II](#), voiced the dramatic situation in which they live in the [Message he addressed to the Secretary](#)

[General of the United Nations on 22 September 1990, on the occasion of the World Summit for Children.](#)

“I am a witness of the heart-breaking plight of millions of children on every continent. They are most vulnerable, because they are least able to make their voice heard” (*L’Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 1 October 1990, p. 13). I warmly hope that proper attention will be given to minor migrants who need a social environment that permits and fosters their physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development. Living in a foreign land without effective points of reference generates countless and sometimes serious hardships and difficulties for them, especially those deprived of the support of their family.

A typical aspect of the migration of minors is the situation of children born in the host country or of those who do not live with their parents, who emigrated after their birth, but join them later. These adolescents belong to two cultures with all the advantages and problems attached to their dual background, a condition that can nevertheless offer them the opportunity to experience the wealth of an encounter between different cultural traditions. It is important that these young people be given the possibility of attending school and subsequently of being integrated into the world of work, and that their social integration be facilitated by appropriate educational and social structures. It should never be forgotten that adolescence constitutes a fundamental phase for the formation of human beings.

A particular category of minors is that of refugees seeking asylum, who, for various reasons, are fleeing their own country, where they are not given adequate protection. Statistics show that their numbers are increasing. This is therefore a phenomenon that calls for careful evaluation and coordinated action by implementing appropriate measures of prevention, protection and welcome, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (cf. Art. 22).

I now turn in particular to parishes and to the many Catholic associations which, imbued with a spirit of faith and charity, take pains to meet the needs of these brothers and sisters of ours. While I express gratitude for all that is being done with great generosity, I would like to invite all Christians to become aware of the social and pastoral challenges posed by migrant and refugee minors.

Jesus' words resound in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35), as, likewise, the central commandment he left us: to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, but together with love of neighbour (cf. Mt 22:37-39).

This leads us to consider that any of our concrete interventions must first be nurtured by faith in the action of grace and divine Providence. In this way also hospitality and solidarity to strangers, especially if they are children, become a proclamation of the Gospel of solidarity. The Church proclaims this when she opens her arms and strives to have the rights of migrants and refugees respected, moving the leaders of Nations, and those in charge of international organizations and institutions to promote opportune initiatives for their support.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary watch over us all and help us to understand the difficulties faced by those who are far from their homeland. I assure all those who are involved in the vast world of migrants and refugees of my prayers and cordially impart to them the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 16 October 2009.

2.

Suggestions for Parish Liturgies on World Day for Migrants and Refugees¹

2.1 Preparation

The following suggestions can be adapted to suit your parish. Invite people of different ages, gender and ethnicity to prepare the Church, to participate in the Entrance Procession, to give a Welcome, to be readers, and to engage in any other tasks. These people should be notified in advance.

In many parishes a number of languages are spoken. Some of these could be incorporated into the liturgy, for example:

- A reading could be done in another language and the English translation provided in the bulletin.
- Some of the Intercessions could be translated into another language.
- Appropriate hymns in other languages could be sung.

2.2 Entrance Procession

The procession could include people of different nationalities in national dress, bringing flags and/or cultural symbols.

2.3 Welcome

Today is the day when the Church in Ireland invites us to pray for migrants and refugees to our country. Some of us may be migrants or refugees, and certainly most of us have been touched by personal experiences of immigration and emigration. Today, let us celebrate the richness of our nation, with its population drawn from various countries, races, cultures and religions. Let us resolve to welcome the stranger, and to create a harmonious and multicultural nation that offers freedom, peace, democracy, acceptance and opportunity to all.

¹ *The IECI would like to acknowledge the Australian, England and Wales and United States Bishops' Conferences contributions to these liturgical suggestions.*

2.4 Penitential Rite

- Lord Jesus, You call us to work with and support one another. *Lord, have mercy.*
- You call us to work for the common good of all people, and to bring hope, justice, truth and freedom to our world. *Christ, have mercy.*
- You call us into community with the whole of creation. *Lord, have mercy.*

2.5 Readings

- **Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18**

Joshua, near the end of a life of leadership and service, gathers the twelve tribes of Israel and asks them whom will they serve, challenging them to renew their covenant with God. Remembering all that God had done for them, the people choose to serve the Lord. They make their profession of faith: *We too will serve the Lord, for He is our God.*

- **Ephesians 5:21-32**

Jesus was totally obedient in his life and is the model for us in our relationship with one another. We are called to give total service to one another, and to give every person dignity and respect.

- **John 6:60-69**

Jesus knew that many of the crowd may have followed him because they witnessed the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. Now he invites them into a deeper intimacy with him through eating his body and drinking his blood. He asks his disciples to choose him as the very essence of life, but only “the Twelve” remain. It is Simon Peter who makes the profession of faith on their behalf: *Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.*

2.6 Homily Notes

The Readings can be linked with today's celebration of World Day for Migrants and Refugees, as they invite us to respond to the Word of God by changing our way of thinking and even our way of life. While society and the political climate may encourage us to think only of ourselves, as Catholics we are invited always to choose what is for the common good.

2.7 Prayer of the Faithful / Intercessions

About six of all of the following could be used

Celebrant: Let us pray to the God who welcomes and provides for all, who hears our prayers, and in whose image we are made.

- We pray for the Church: that Christ may become more visible in our commitment to serve God and all people.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray for refugees: that God's presence will give them comfort in their insecurity, and that our efforts will bring them hope and justice.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray for all migrants who have made Ireland their home: that they may they live in peace, happiness and prosperity; and that we may all be enriched by the values, customs and cultures that we share.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray for ourselves: that we may welcome the stranger, offer support to those who have recently arrived, and give comfort to the homesick.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray again for ourselves: that we may be prepared to help people in developing nations; that we may live simply so that others may simply live.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- For migrants, refugees, and strangers in our midst, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- For our public officials, that they may find ways to treat immigrants and refugees with justice.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*

- 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.*
- For migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that they may be welcomed in our parish.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- For all those who are overwhelmed by loneliness, poverty, and despair, that they may be comforted through our help and kindness.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- For those in special need, that the Lord in his divine mercy may heal the sick, comfort the dying, and keep travellers safe.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray for those who leave their homes in search of new beginnings and possibilities, may they know your presence with them.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray that those who seek to make a home in this country may find us welcoming and willing to help them find a path toward citizenship.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*
- We pray for those who fan the flames of fear and discrimination against the undocumented may be touched with your divine compassion.
 - *Lord Hear Us.*

Celebrant: God our Father, hear our prayers for all who are made in your image and likeness. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, Your Son. Amen

2.8 The Lord's Prayer

Everyone could be invited to pray aloud the "*Our Father*" in his/her mother tongue.

2.9 Sign of Peace

Participants could be invited to offer one another a sign of peace, using their first language and traditional/cultural gesture.

3.

World Day for Migrants and Refugees Parish Bulletin Insert

Today is Refugee and Migrant Sunday when we are reminded to celebrate with thanks the diversity of peoples in Ireland. The Church, like the nation, is made up of peoples from many different countries with different languages and customs. We are also invited today to pray for migrants and refugees that they may be welcomed warmly into our midst. This year's World Day for Migrants theme – “*Minor migrants and refugees*” – touches an aspect that Christians view with great attention, remembering the most vulnerable people in our midst, children. Children are dependant on others for food, shelter, and guidance. Children often suffer the most in times of trial and difficulty. Guide and bring those children who are strangers in a our land to a place of peace and safety and help us comfort them and bring help in their time of need.

4.

Additional Resources on World Day for Migrants and Refugees

4.1 Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

4.2 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 your Son

- in the migrant who labours to bring food to our tables
- 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 Son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

4.3 Mary, our Mother, 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 too. Guide us along safe paths, protect us from evil, and free us from all fear. 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 recognize that the only path to your Son is the way of justice. Strengthen us to make straight this way before him. Show us the Way.

Open our hearts and minds to the suffering of victims of human trafficking, children held in detention, and other vulnerable persons in need of our hope and help in their time of struggle.

Amen.

4.4 We ask you to teach us to welcome newcomers to our land and to serve them with the same joy you embodied.

Beg Jesus, on our behalf, to give us the same gifts of faith, hope, and love that he brought to perfection in you.

We seek faith, that our trust in God will strengthen us to carry on the works of peace and justice. We seek hope, that our confidence will shine as a beacon to those who flee to our land in despair.

We seek love, the perfect love which casts out all fear, that we may welcome strangers in our land with true peace and generosity of spirit.

Guide us on our own journey home to Jesus, that we may dwell in his love forever, praising God.

Amen.
