

Welcoming,  
Protecting,  
Promoting and  
Integrating  
Migrants and  
Refugees



WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

14 January 2018

PARISH RESOURCE PACK

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*'Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness.'* (Seneca)



## Foreword

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As we celebrate the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on Sunday, 14 January 2018, it is important that we come together to pray and remember our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters living in our dioceses, our parishes and especially those in direct provision centres in our country. Pope Francis, in his message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018, says that providing aid to migrants and refugees is a 'great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities'.

The Holy Father reminds us that 'welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees' are essential to the Christian faith.

Please join with Pope Francis and the Council for Immigrants of the Irish Bishops' Conference in drawing attention to the call of Pope Francis to welcome migrants and refugees into our dioceses and parishes.

We hope this resource pack will assist you in raising awareness of the challenges facing our migrants and refugees in Ireland and throughout the world. We encourage you to make use of these resources to reach out to the people of your diocese and parish.

If the Council for Immigration can be of any assistance to you in your ministry, please contact our offices in the Columba Centre, Maynooth. We also encourage you to visit our website: [www.catholicbishops.ie/immigrants](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/immigrants).

Bishop Raymond Field  
*Chair of the Council for Immigrants of the Irish Bishops' Conference*

*'I would like to ask you all to see a ray of hope as well in the eyes and hearts of refugees and for those who have been forcibly displaced.'*



## Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 104<sup>th</sup> World Day of Migrants and Refugees

14 January 2018

### Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees

Dear brothers and sisters!

'You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.' (Lev 19:34)

Throughout the first years of my pontificate, I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a 'sign of the times' which I have tried to interpret, with the help of the Holy Spirit, ever since my visit to Lampedusa on 8 July 2013. When I instituted the new Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, I wanted a particular section – under my personal direction for the time being – to express the Church's concern for migrants, displaced people, refugees and victims of human trafficking.

Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (Cf. Mt 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church's motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future.<sup>1</sup> This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that 'our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate*'.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the current situation, *welcoming* means, above all, offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally. This calls for a concrete commitment to increase and simplify the process for granting humanitarian visas and for reunifying families. At the same time, I hope that a greater number of countries will adopt private and community sponsorship programmes, and open humanitarian corridors for particularly vulnerable refugees. Furthermore, special temporary visas should be granted to people fleeing conflicts in neighbouring countries. Collective and arbitrary expulsions of migrants and refugees are not suitable solutions, particularly where people are returned to countries which cannot guarantee respect for human dignity and fundamental rights.<sup>3</sup> Once again, I want to emphasise the importance of offering migrants and refugees adequate and dignified initial accommodation. 'More widespread programmes of welcome, already initiated in different places, seem to favour a personal encounter and allow for greater quality of service and increased guarantees of success.'<sup>4</sup> The principle of the centrality of the human person, firmly stated by my beloved Predecessor, Benedict XVI,<sup>5</sup> obliges us to always prioritise personal safety over national security. It is necessary, therefore, to ensure that agents in charge of border control are properly trained. The situation of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees requires that they be guaranteed personal safety and access to basic services. For the sake of the fundamental dignity of every human person, we must strive to find alternative solutions to detention for those who enter a country without authorisation.<sup>6</sup>

The second verb – *protecting* – may be understood as a series of steps intended to defend the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees, independent of their legal status.<sup>7</sup> Such protection begins in the country of origin, and consists in offering reliable and verified information before departure, and in providing safety from illegal recruitment practices.<sup>8</sup> This must be ongoing, as far as possible, in the country of migration, guaranteeing them adequate consular assistance, the right to personally retain their documents of identification at all times, fair access to justice, the possibility of opening a personal bank account, and a minimum sufficient income to live on. When duly recognised and valued, the potential and skills of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are a true resource for the communities that welcome them.<sup>9</sup> This is why I hope that, in countries of arrival, migrants may be offered freedom of movement, work opportunities, and access to means of communication, out of respect for their dignity. For those who decide to return to their homeland, I want to emphasise the need to develop social and professional reintegration programmes. The International Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a universal legal basis for the protection of underage migrants. They must be spared any form of detention related to migratory status, and must be guaranteed regular access to primary and secondary education. Equally, when they come of age they must be guaranteed the right to remain and to enjoy the possibility of continuing their studies. Temporary custody or foster programmes should be provided for unaccompanied minors and minors separated from their families.<sup>10</sup> The universal right to a nationality should be recognised and duly certified for all children at birth. The statelessness which migrants and refugees sometimes fall into can easily be avoided with the adoption of ‘nationality legislation that is in conformity with the fundamental principles of international law’.<sup>11</sup> Migratory status should not limit access to national healthcare and pension plans, nor affect the transfer of their contributions if repatriated.

*Promoting* essentially means a determined effort to ensure that all migrants and refugees – as well as the communities which welcome them – are empowered to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions which constitute the humanity intended by the Creator.<sup>12</sup> Among these, we must recognise the true value of the religious dimension, ensuring to all foreigners in any country the freedom of religious belief and practice. Many migrants and refugees have abilities which must be appropriately recognised and valued. Since ‘work, by its nature, is meant to unite peoples’,<sup>13</sup> I encourage a determined effort to promote the social and professional inclusion of migrants and refugees, guaranteeing for all – including those seeking asylum – the possibility of employment, language instruction and active citizenship, together with sufficient information provided in their mother tongue. In the case of underage migrants, their involvement in labour must be regulated to prevent exploitation and risks to their normal growth and development. In 2006, Benedict XVI highlighted how, in the context of migration, the family is ‘a place and resource of the culture of life and a factor for the integration of values’.<sup>14</sup> The family’s integrity must always be promoted, supporting family reunifications – including grandparents, grandchildren and siblings – independent of financial requirements. Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities must be granted greater assistance and support. While I recognise the praiseworthy efforts, thus far, of many countries, in terms of international cooperation and humanitarian aid, I hope that the offering of this assistance will take into account the needs (such as medical and social assistance, as well as education) of developing countries which receive a significant influx of migrants and refugees. I also hope that local communities which are vulnerable and facing material hardship, will be included among aid beneficiaries.<sup>15</sup>

The final verb – *integrating* – concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment brought about by the presence of migrants and refugees. Integration is not ‘an assimilation that leads migrants to suppress or to forget their own cultural identity. Rather, contact with others leads to discovering their ‘secret’, to being open to them in order to welcome their valid aspects and thus contribute to knowing each one better. This is a lengthy process that aims to shape societies and cultures, making them more and more a reflection of the multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings’.<sup>16</sup> This process can be accelerated by granting citizenship free of financial or linguistic requirements, and by offering the possibility of special legalisation to migrants who can claim a long period of residence

in the country of arrival. I reiterate the need to foster a culture of encounter in every way possible – by increasing opportunities for intercultural exchange, documenting and disseminating best practices of integration, and developing programmes to prepare local communities for integration processes. I wish to stress the special case of people forced to abandon their country of arrival due to a humanitarian crisis. These people must be ensured adequate assistance for repatriation and effective reintegration programmes in their home countries.

In line with her pastoral tradition, the Church is ready to commit herself to realising all the initiatives proposed above. Yet in order to achieve the desired outcome, the contribution of political communities and civil societies is indispensable, each according to their own responsibilities.

At the United Nations Summit held in New York on 29 September 2016, world leaders clearly expressed their desire to take decisive action in support of migrants and refugees to save their lives and protect their rights, sharing this responsibility on a global level. To this end, the states committed themselves to drafting and approving, before the end of 2018, two Global Compacts, one for refugees and the other for migrants.

Dear brothers and sisters, in light of these processes currently underway, the coming months offer a unique opportunity to advocate and support the concrete actions which I have described with four verbs. I invite you, therefore, to use every occasion to share this message with all political and social actors involved (or who seek to be involved) in the process which will lead to the approval of the two Global Compacts.

Today, 15 August, we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of Mary. The Holy Mother of God herself experienced the hardship of exile (Mt 2:13–15), lovingly accompanied her Son's journey to Calvary, and now shares eternally his glory. To her maternal intercession we entrust the hopes of all the world's migrants and refugees and the aspirations of the communities which welcome them, so that, responding to the Lord's supreme commandment, we may all learn to love the other, the stranger, as ourselves.

Vatican City, 15 August 2017: Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Franciscus

#### Endnotes

1. Cf. Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia, Titulus Primus*, I.
2. *Address to Participants in the International Forum on 'Migration and Peace'*, 21 February 2017.
3. Cf. *Statement of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the 103<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Council of the IOM*, 26 November 2013.
4. *Address to Participants in the International Forum on 'Migration and Peace'* 21 February 2017.
5. Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 47.
6. Cf. *Statement of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the 20<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council*, 22 June 2012.
7. Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, 62.
8. Cf. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, Instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, 6.
9. Cf. Benedict XVI, *Address to the Participants in the 6<sup>th</sup> World Congress for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*, 9 November 2009.
10. Cf. Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2010)* and *Statement of the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Human Rights Council on the Human Rights of Migrants*, 13 June 2014.
11. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and Pontifical Council *Cor Unum, Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons*, 2013, 70.
12. Cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 14.
13. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 27.
14. Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2007)*.
15. Cf. Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and Pontifical Council *Cor Unum, Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons*, 2013, 30-31.
16. John Paul II, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2005)*.

## Immigrant Family Prayer

God our Father we thank you for the gift of family life,

We thank you for the joy, love and friendship of family life.

As Our Father we ask you to provide protection and care for all families especially those who face danger, hardships and threats as they move in search of safety and a better life.

Be with those who travel in danger and in your loving kindness lead them to a place of safety, peace and rest.

Show comfort to those who are alone and who fear for their families who have been separated by violence, war, injustice and famine.

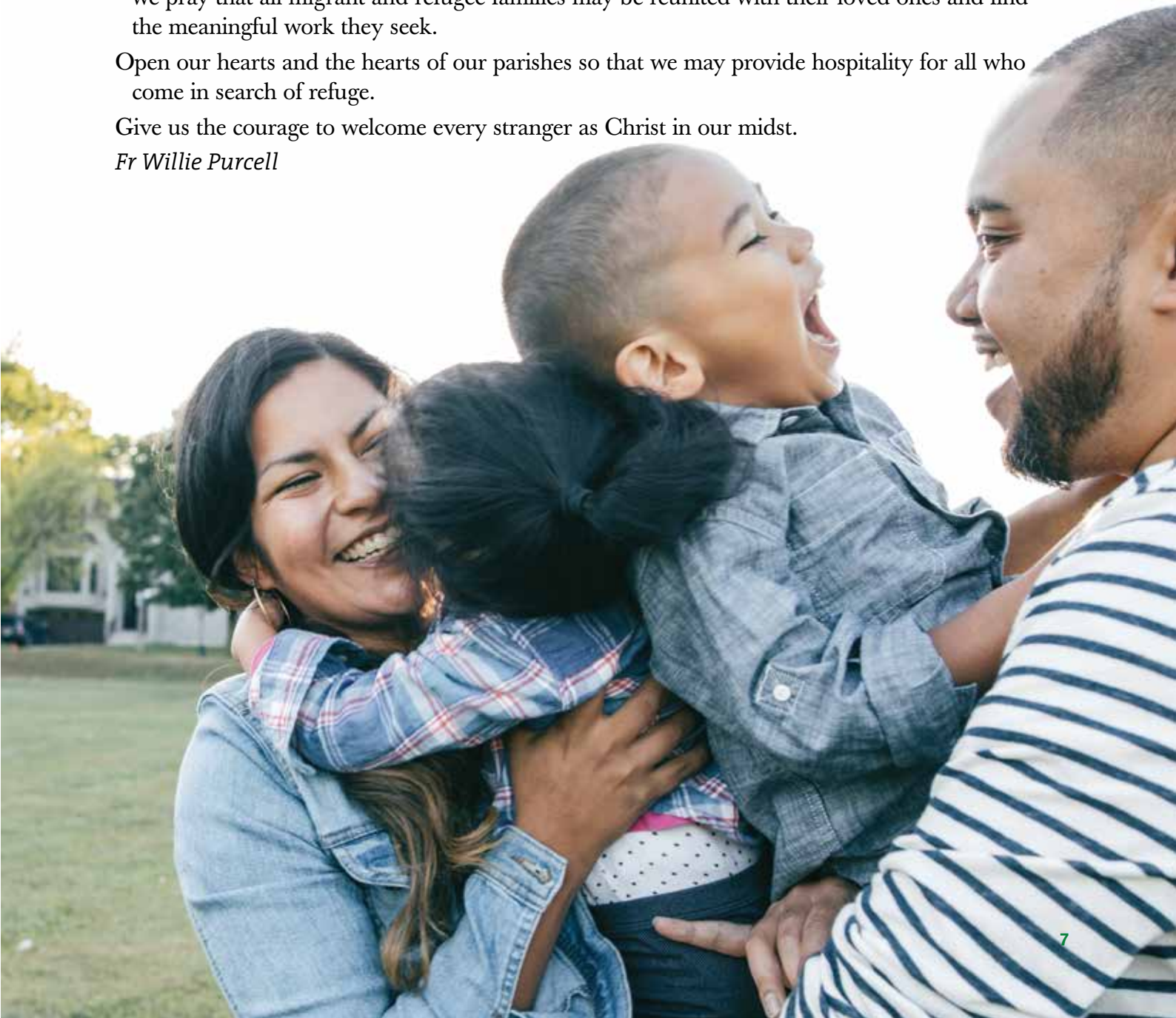
As we celebrate the World Meeting of Families we remember the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant and refugee families.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, St Joseph, her spouse, St Patrick and St Brigid we pray that all migrant and refugee families may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek.

Open our hearts and the hearts of our parishes so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge.

Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst.

*Fr Willie Purcell*





## Indonesian Creed

I believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us and free us from all forms of oppression.

I believe in the Spirit of God, who works in and through all who are turned towards the truth.

I believe in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people.

I believe in God's promise to destroy the power of sin in all people and establish the reign of justice and peace for all humankind.

I do not believe in the right of the strongest, nor the force of arms, or the power of oppression.

I believe in human rights, in the solidarity of all people, in the power of non-violence.

I do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege, or in any established order that enslaves.

I believe that all men and women are equally human and that order based on violence and injustice is not order.

I do not believe that we can ignore things that happen far away.

I believe that the whole world is my home and that the field I plough and the harvest I reap belong to every person.

I do not believe that I can fight oppression far away if I tolerate injustice here.

I believe that there is but one right everywhere and that I am not free if one person remains enslaved.

I do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable and peace unattainable.

I believe in the beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what God intended.

But I dare to believe always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish.

Unknown



*'Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.'*



## **Suggested Homily Notes for World Day of Migrants and Refugees**

14 January 2018

On this day of prayer for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees we are asked to pray for all Migrants and refugees who leave home for whatever reason, to pray for the families they leave behind and pray for the communities, dioceses and parishes that welcome them.

There is a long scriptural foundation for hospitality. It is clear in the Gospels that people on the move – refugees, migrants, immigrants – are special in the eyes of God. Jesus was a refugee who, along with Mary and Joseph, fled the terror of Herod into Egypt (Cf. Mt 2:14–15). In his public ministry, Jesus was an migrant preacher, always on the move, ‘with nowhere to lay His Head’ (Mt 8:20).

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus instructs us to welcome the stranger: ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.’ (Mt 25–35) Jesus was not welcomed by his own people: ‘He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him.’ (Jn 1:11) As we welcome the migrant and refugee into our dioceses and parishes, we welcome Christ himself, for in the face of the migrant and refugee, we come face to face with the suffering Christ.

The Emmaus story in the Gospel of St Luke shows us that the experience of the disciples on the road (Cf. Lk 24:13–15), led them to witness to the Truth by welcoming the stranger, who is Christ.

Migrants and refugees have always had a special place in the heart of God. The Hebrews were instructed to care for the orphan, the widow and the stranger in their midst. They were never to forget their own refugee experience of being strangers within Egypt when their crops had failed and they had to move to the Nile for a better life.

The challenge and task of our dioceses and parishes is to share with our migrant brothers and sisters the new life offered in Christ. We are to offer and live out a life in which all of us are sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters of Christ, in which there is mutual respect and in which the fullness of humanity, like the selfless life of Jesus, is the lived ideal.

‘Nations and local communities,’ Pope Francis said, ‘need to do more to integrate migrants and refugees in the communities that welcome them.’ Integration does not mean that we ask the newcomers to give up their cultural identity, but that they will have opportunities to share their cultures and to discover the cultural heritage of their new parish communities.

Our challenge today is to hear in their cry for help of our migrant brothers and sisters the voice of Jesus himself who says: ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock’ and to open the door of our hearts in welcome. Our challenge is to proclaim in our words and deeds that migrants and refugees are our brothers and sisters and that it is our responsibility to be their family wherever they live. The words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, ‘Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’ (Mt 25:40) should be our mantra.

The call of this Migrant and Refugee Sunday is to move beyond ourselves, beyond our own comfort zones and preconceived ideas and reach out to those who are in need of our help. We need to break our shell of selfishness and self-centredness and become more outward looking, seeing the face of Christ in the suffering and the poor.

It is often the simplest of things that can make the biggest of differences for the migrants and refugees in our parish community: instead of turning our face away, a simple smile of welcome which says I respect you, and instead of avoiding them, a short conversation asking how you are and if everything is ok, to mean that I am concerned about you. In other words, doing something little but beautiful which will have a tremendous effect on the poor, the hurting, the fearful and the lonely. Pope Francis reminds us that this is an encounter and it is from here we move forward together in solidarity, exchanging stories of each other, giving to and receiving from the other and contributing together to the welfare of the parish community. We need to experience multiculturalism not as a threat but as an opportunity.

The upcoming World Meeting of Families in Ireland is an opportunity for us to reach out in sincere love and care for migrant families living in our dioceses, parishes and in direct provision centres. We are all the children of God, and God calls us to love our neighbour whoever he or she may be. Our neighbours don't always look like us, pray like us, dress like us or talk like us, but each one deserves a chance to flourish in this life. Migrant and refugee families desperately need food, shelter, education, safety and a chance to rebuild their lives. The Catholic Church teaches that people have a right to meet their needs at home and the right to leave when they cannot. Governments have a duty to protect them, and it is our obligation to help those who are suffering.

It is important that we create a culture of encounter and welcome in our dioceses and parishes where migrants and refugees have come to seek and build a better life, to hear firsthand their personal stories and experiences, to assure them of the our solidarity with them, and to remember that it is Christ we are welcoming when we open our hearts to migrants and refugees.

Fr Willie Purcell, *Council for Immigrants*

'Migrants trust that they will encounter acceptance, solidarity, and help, that they will meet people who will sympathise with the distress and tragedy experienced by others, recognise the values and resources the latter have to offer, and are open to sharing humanly and materially with the needy and disadvantaged.'  
(Pope Francis)

## Prayers of the Faithful

- \* 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. We pray to the Lord.
- \* For the courage to fight for children who are trafficked and forcefully taken from their homeland that their rights and dignity will be respected. We pray to the Lord.
- \* For those who endanger their lives and travel perilous journeys to the unknown, that they may not lose hope but may be strengthened by our open hearts and open arms. We pray to the Lord.
- \* For all in direct provision centres in our country, may they know generosity, kindness and freedom to live among us as brothers and sisters. We pray to the Lord.
- \* For the many volunteers who carry out loving deeds and who are dedicated and committed to welcoming migrants, may they know the love and blessing of God. We pray to the Lord.
- \* For the courage as faith communities to challenge continuously political commitment to the dignity of the human person and bring an end to dangerous and mass migration. We pray to the Lord.

Sr Julie Doran OLA, *Council for Immigrants*



*'The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place, or disposable.'*  
(Pope Francis)

## Parish Bulletin Inserts

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### **Participating in World Day of Migrants and Refugees**

The celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees will also be the occasion for a growing sense of urgency in commitment ... (The Vatican Document, *Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants*, 2004). Is the World Day for Migrants and Refugees celebrated in solidarity with, and inclusive of, migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who live in the parish communities?

### **Welcoming one another**

'Welcome one another then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God.' (Rm 15:7) We are called by Christ to welcome one another, regardless of race, creed or religion.

### **Outreaching to migrants and refugees through witness of our own lives**

'The lay faithful are also called to promote the evangelisation of ... migrants through the witness of their own lives as Christians.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants*, 2004) Is there an adequate outreach programme for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in parish communities?

### **Welcoming migrants and refugees as brothers and sisters**

'The lay faithful should be engaged in concretely carrying out what truth, justice and love require. They should thus welcome migrants as brothers and sisters.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants*, 2004) Are migrants, asylum seekers and refugees made to feel welcome in the parish communities?

### **Assisting migrants and refugees to take part in parish and diocesan councils**

'Where migrants are more numerous they, in particular, should be offered the possibility of taking part in the diocesan ... and parish pastoral councils.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants*, 2004) Is the opportunity given to migrants and refugees to take part in diocesan and parish councils?

### **Listening as the key to understanding culture**

'"Inculturation" begins by listening.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants*, 2004). Listening fosters understanding, empathy and acceptance of cultural differences.

### **Promoting authentic 'culture of welcome'**

'Christians must in fact promote an authentic culture of welcome ... capable of accepting the truly human values of the immigrants over and above the difficulties caused by living together with persons who are different.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants, 2004*) How might a 'culture of welcome' be promoted in a practical sense within parish communities?

### **Providing pastoral care for, among and with migrants and refugees**

'Because it is a dialogue, communion and mission, specific pastoral care for, among and with migrants will then become a significant expression for the Church, called to be a fraternal and peaceful meeting place, a home for all.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants, 2004*). How is pastoral care being provided for, among and with migrants (as well as asylum seekers and refugees) in parish communities?

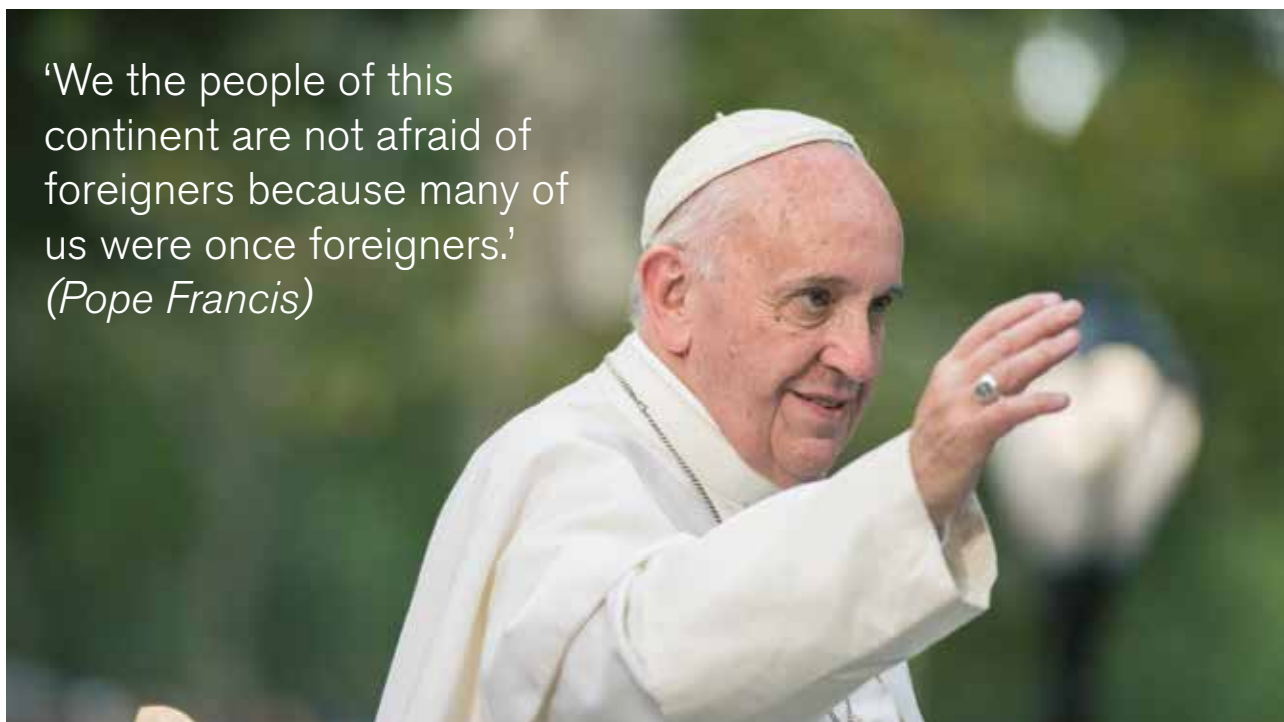
### **Respecting migrants' and refugees' traditions and cultures**

'With great respect and attention for the migrants' traditions and culture, we Christians are called to bear witness to the gospel of love and peace in our dealings with them.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants, 2004*).

### **Tolerance is not enough**

'Tolerance is not enough; needed is a certain feeling for the other, respect as far as possible for the cultural identity of one's dialogue partners.' (*Instruction: The Love of Christ towards Migrants, 2004*).

'We the people of this continent are not afraid of foreigners because many of us were once foreigners.'  
(*Pope Francis*)





## Parish Resources

### Welcoming the stranger into our parishes: Some first steps

This offers: 'Seven first steps that parishes might adopt as they begin to develop a ministry of welcome to their community'.

1. **Meet and greet at liturgies:** Develop a team whose ministry is to welcome people, be they regulars or newcomers, when they come into Church.
2. **Welcome newcomers:** Make sure newcomers are acknowledged and welcomed by someone on the altar during the Mass. Everyone is involved in the welcoming of newcomers – sometimes the most gratifying welcome a visitor can receive is from someone (s)he wouldn't expect to welcome him/her, in a place (s)he didn't expect it to happen.
3. **House blessings:** Develop a team who will visit newcomers to the parish and who will offer them a house blessing ceremony.
4. **Baptismal teams:** The Baptism of a child can be an important point of contact between your parish and newcomers. It can be used as an ideal opportunity to welcome new families into the life of the parish.
5. **Newsletter segments in other languages:** Include segments in your newsletter in the languages of immigrant communities in your parish.
6. **Connect with other local immigrant services:** We often struggle to know how best to engage with newcomers in our communities. There will be many organisations working with immigrants in your local area. Contact them! They may be able to point to specific needs immigrants in your community have or to establish projects that you might support.
7. **Meeting people where they are at:** Be creative in meeting people where they usually socialise, work or live, rather than expecting them to slot into existing parish activities.

'Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.'  
*(Pope Francis)*

*'There was a sense of relief when we landed in Ireland.'*



## A Migrant's Testimony

By Selah

'There was a sense of relief when we landed in Ireland. One part of the journey had ended. We left behind a long history and heritage in our homeland; we were given no choice. I had to catch my breath and then quickly begin to understand how to support my family. The only comfort I have right now is in my faith in Christ and his plan for us. Brothers and sisters, please pray that we may soon feel like we belong to your parish, like it is home for us now.'

## Celtic Rune of Hospitality

I saw a stranger yesterday  
I put food in the eating place  
drink in the drinking place  
music in the listening place

And in the sacred name of the Triune  
He blessed myself and my house  
my cattle and my dear ones

And the lark said in her song  
often often often  
Goes the Christ in stranger's guise  
often often often  
Goes the Christ in stranger's guise



*'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'*  
(Mt 25:35)



## The Way of the Cross of Migrants

*'We Walk by Faith, Not by Sight'* (2 Cor 5:7)

### Opening Prayer:

**Leader:** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you always watch over us and wait on us. The way to you, Almighty God, our heavenly Father is through Jesus, the way, and the truth and the life (Jn 14:6).

**All:** Lord Jesus Christ, we will now walk with you and follow your way. We will go the Way of the Cross with love, dedication, and faith. We will walk the Way of the Cross with our family and friends, with our migrants and refugee brothers and sisters. We are with them, in our hearts and minds, on this Way of the Cross.

### FIRST STATION

#### Jesus is Condemned to Death

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading

Pilate said to them, 'And what shall I do with Jesus called the Messiah?' All answered, 'Crucify him!' Pilate insisted, 'What evil has he done?' But they shouted louder, 'Crucify him!' Then Pilate set Barabbas free, but had Jesus scourged, and handed him over to be crucified.

### Reflection:

We migrants are forced to leave our home country to find better lives in foreign lands. We seek a future that remains elusive in our home country. Leaving family and friends causes deep sorrow and profound sadness. It is an everyday cross that we choose to accept and carry.

### SECOND STATION

#### Jesus Carries the Cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading (Jn 19:16–17)

### Reflection:

Jesus came into this world with only one aim, to accomplish the divine plan of the Father. Jesus accepted the cross, carried it, and was crucified on it.

We migrants brave uncertain lands, bringing with us only our faith in God and the cultural identities. We come and work to fulfil not only our own wishes but also of those whom we have left behind. We strive and struggle to keep alive the hope of our loved ones. This is the cross that we must carry.

### THIRD STATION

#### Jesus Falls for the First Time

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading (Is 53:4–5)

### Reflections:

Jesus gives everything to us. His body was battered and bruised for our sake. Under its weight, Jesus collapsed. Yet he did not stay fallen. He stood up and continued to carry his burden.



Many migrant workers fall victim to illegal recruiters and human traffickers. Migrants should not remain trapped in those degrading situations. There should be change and conversion. There should be help and healing. They should be looked after with care and concern.

#### **FOURTH STATION** **Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### **Scriptural Reading (Lk 2:34–35)**

Dramatisation of the Meeting of Jesus and His Mother, Mary.

#### **FIFTH STATION** **Simon of Cyrene Helps Jesus Carry the Cross**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

#### **Scriptural Reading (Lk 23:26)**

**Reflection** (Mt 24:40):

Pastoral care and charity to migrants is a requirement of the Gospel. Pastoral care of migrants signifies respectful welcome, their protection and promotion regardless of their religious and cultural identities. Migrants are people who must be included in a country's social life and the sacramental life of the Church.

#### **SIXTH STATION** **Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### **Scriptural Reading (Ps 22:24–26)**

**Reflection:**

We migrants are away from home. We know there are tears behind laughter; hurts behind smiles. We know that despite our confident faces, there is also fear; behind the nice clothes, there are bruises; behind colourful masks, there are scars from life's battles. We need to wipe away each other's doubts and disappointments, bruises and bitterness, hardships and heartaches.

#### **SEVENTH STATION** **Jesus Falls for the Second Time**

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### **Scriptural Reading (Jn 12:23–24)**

**Reflection:**

Jesus is very willing to give everything to us for our salvation. He continues to search for us and to save us. Jesus wants us not to give in to pain or to our problems. Jesus wishes us not to give up in the face of trials and troubles.

Migrants sometimes fall prey to luxuries and the temptation of easy money. We are easily tempted by instant gratification and false hopes. We must always realise that no real hope or lasting comfort can be found in alcohol, drugs and gambling. God is the true source of comfort and peace.

## EIGHTH STATION

### Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### Scriptural Reading (Lk 23:27–28, 31)

##### Reflection:

Jesus goes out for us. He cares for us. He empathises with us. Jesus was not preoccupied with himself but with us. He wants us to look deeper into our lives and to do something with these.

We migrants worry about being accepted and adjusting in foreign lands. We think of the well-being of our families back home. We worry about our integration and contribution to society. There could be conflicts or discrimination, opposition and contradictions.

## NINTH STATION

### Jesus Falls for the Third Time

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### Scriptural Reading (2 Pt 3:17)

##### Reflection:

Jesus suffered so much because of love. He did everything out of love. He was burdened by the heavy wooden cross, yet he did not complain. He was not bitter. He fell but he got up. He continued his journey.

Many migrants fall into depression because of the difficulties they encounter with their work and the social cost of migration in their family and personal relationships. We must always remember God's love for us and our commitment to our families. Because of this love, we must cling to the good, remain good, go on doing good, and never give up.

## TENTH STATION

### Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

#### Scriptural Reading (Jn 19:23–24)

##### Reflection:

In all of his sufferings, Jesus kept his purpose in mind: obedience to the Father's will, and the salvation of mankind. He was not concerned with what happened to his body. What is valuable to Jesus is our reconciliation with the Father and with each other.

Migrants should not be treated as merchandise or tools but as people in need of fraternal charity and solidarity. We should not be feared or kept in isolation. We should never be considered as burden or threat. We are not mere tools of production. We are made in God's image.

## ELEVENTH STATION

### Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

#### Scriptural Reading (Mk 15:22–24)

##### Reflection:

Jesus loves us so much. He assumes the burden for us. He loves us so much that he saves us. He loves us so much that he forgives us.

We migrants leave our home countries to seek a better life. We want peace and prosperity for our families and countries. We migrants should find protection, not persecution; integration, not indifferences; acceptance, not discrimination.

## TWELFTH STATION Jesus Dies on the Cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading (Mt 27:46, 50)

#### Reflection:

Jesus' death is a victory of love over hatred, forgiveness over resentment, mercy over a vengeance, and hope over despair. The death of Jesus signals our rising to new life.

Migrants are very much willing to give everything they have for the sake of their loved ones. We work hard, giving all our time and efforts. We work responsibly and honestly. These are our deaths: dying to selfishness, dying to sin and self, dying to idleness and laziness, dying to vices and bad habits.

## THIRTEENTH STATION Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading (Jn 19:38)

#### Reflection:

We carry the saving cross through the roads of the world, through the alleys of poverty and misery. Marching to a dawning day, to freedom and victory to God's life and endless glory.

## FOURTEENTH STATION Jesus is Laid in the Tomb

**Leader:** We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

**All:** Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

### Scriptural Reading (Mt 27:59–60)

#### Reflection:

Jesus accomplishes his salvific mission. He returns to the Father. But he remains with us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus leaves with us his examples and his words.

We migrants always remember our family and friends back home. Despite being oceans apart and miles away, there is a lasting bond between us and our loved ones. It is a bond made up of memories of love, of grateful hearts and of faithful love.

### Closing Prayer

**Leader:** Almighty God, heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your son, Jesus for our salvation. We thank you for the cross of Jesus. We now commit ourselves to you.

**All:** Almighty God, we humbly implore your guiding and caring hands to help us remain faithful and to grow in our Christian faith. May we hold fast to the cross and follow in the footsteps of your son, to his death and Resurrection. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Lord. Amen.

Glory Be...

'When we heal the wounds of refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking, we are practising the commandment of love that Jesus has left us ... Their flesh is that of Christ.'  
(Pope Francis)



'Migrants and refugees  
are not pawns  
on the chessboard  
of humanity.'  
*(Pope Francis)*



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