



Advent 2021 Prayer Reflection Guide 4

Welcoming People on the Move

We continue to prepare being on this path of Advent, a time that revives our hope and fraternity.

1. In today's Gospel (Luke 1:39-40) we see the meeting of two simple women, Mary, and Elizabeth, visited by God, both bearing new life within them.



"Visitation" by Bernardo Strozzi

Mary sets out a few days after being visited by God and answering, *"Let it be done to me according to your word."* She goes to meet Elizabeth, who is already six months pregnant. After Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's reaction is the blessing:

"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! Who am I to be visited by the mother of my Lord?" and with the beatitude: *"Blessed are you, who has believed, for what the Lord has told you will be fulfilled."*

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months as the Gospel indicates. We can contemplate the scene in the house in Ain Karen: see the people, listen to the conversations that Elizabeth and Mary would have had, the mutual help and accompaniment, Elizabeth as an older woman, more experienced, and Mary with her attitude of service, and her youth.

2. How might this meeting between Mary and Elizabeth shed light today on our commitment to welcome migrant peoples, seeking refuge and hope for a better future?

Migrants leave their countries because of economic poverty, climate poverty, persecution for different reasons; they are bearers of hope for a better life for themselves and their families, they risk everything - even their lives, for a life of dignity to which they are entitled by the very fact of being persons and belonging to the human family.

Our commitment to JPIC forces us to re-examine how we stand in solidarity with those who are on these "borders" so that the hope of a life of dignity to which they are entitled becomes a reality and does not remain just a dream, but can unfold and be a blessing, so that migrants may sing their own Magnificat, as Mary did.

Time of Silence - (Song: [Wait for the Lord - Taizé](#))

We can share some of these points from our own experience.

- *How can we be co-responsible and supportive in the face of this reality?*
- *How can we accompany through listening and meaningful gestures?*
- *How can we help sustain hope in times of difficulty or failure?*
- *How can we denounce unjust laws that need to be suppressed or modified and denounce inhumane physical and psychological practices?*
- *How can we share our personal resources: time, skills, knowledge?*
- *The decisions of the Special Chapter will enlighten us in our commitment to migrant peoples.*

3. **Let us pray for the people who are migrating at this very moment: crossing deserts, crossing seas, waiting at the borders for the moment to cross, living in refugee camps for the displaced...**

Let us pray that the hope that dwells in them can be made a reality through the solidarity of welcoming groups and societies, fostering friendship and the culture of true encounter, committed to migrants to build together with them a more just and fraternal world.

Let us pray...

4. **Pope Francis has visited the refugees once more on the island of Lesbos, in the camp that houses around 2,200 asylum seekers. We value his gesture of closeness and solidarity, and his message:**

Pope Francis affirmed that migration is “*a world problem, a humanitarian crisis that concerns everyone*,” adding that the pandemic, which has affected us globally, has made us “*feel we are all in the same boat, and experience what it means to have the same fears*.” Humanity has understood that the great problems are “*faced together, because in today's world fragmented solutions are inadequate. If there are no comprehensive policies, there will be no serene and prosperous future*.”

Pope Francis insisted that, if there is no reconciliation with the weakest, there will be no prosperous future. To reject the poor, he said, is to reject peace. He asked God to keep us alert and responsive to those who suffer, to shake us from the individualism that excludes, to awaken hearts deaf to the needs of others. Problems are solved not with walls but by joining forces to take care of others. “*The Mediterranean Sea has become a cold graveyard without tombstones*.”

How does God visit me through migrants?



Unsplash: Inbal Malca

Do I bless them?

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