

WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

“Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees”

25th Sept. 2022



INTRODUCTION

On 28 December 1908, an earthquake, followed by a tsunami, struck southern Italy, killing 200,000 people and leaving thousands homeless and refugees. Many of them were given shelter in the Vatican by Pope Pius X. He instituted the World Refugee Day in 1914. He asked priests and Religious to learn the language of refugees and to accompany them. His successor, Pope Benedict XV, added ‘Migrants’ to this world day. The Day of Migrants and Refugees has been celebrated on different days in different parts of the Church. Pope Francis has declared in 2019 that the day will be celebrated on the last Sunday of September. This year it falls on 25 September.

Today we celebrate the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. According to the Church, the conditions and needs of migrants and refugees are similar. However, the UN does not want to treat migrants as refugees equally. Thus, since 2001, UN has celebrated International Refugee Day on 20 June and International Migrants Day on 18 December.

These days are held to raise awareness of the plight of millions of refugees and asylum seekers who, forced by war, violence and persecution, leave their families, homes and safety to seek refuge in another country.

There are 240 million displaced people in the world. Of these, 68.5 million are forcibly displaced, 40 million are internally displaced, 25.4 million are refugees, 3.1 million are asylum seekers and 10 million are stateless. Not all refugees come to Europe. 85% of them are in developing countries. 3.5 million are in Turkey, 1.4 million in Uganda, 1.4 million in Pakistan, 1.0 million in Lebanon. In Europe, there are only 5.2 million refugees.

For this year, the Holy Father has chosen the theme “Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees” to underline that we are all called together for, building a future that responds to God’s plan without excluding anyone. “Building with” means above all recognizing and promoting the contribution of migrants and refugees in this work of construction, because only in this way we can build a world that ensures the conditions for integral human development for all.

We are all travelers on this earth and we are all called to seek our true homeland: the Kingdom of God. This kingdom is already within us, but its full realization will only be seen at the return of the Lord in glory (Hebrews 13:14).

Song: [click here](#)

Building the future with migrants and refugees also means recognizing and valuing how much each of them can contribute to the process of construction. We like to see this approach to migration reflected in a prophetic vision of Isaiah, which considers foreigners not invaders or destroyers, but willing labourers who rebuild the walls of the new Jerusalem, that Jerusalem whose gates are open to all peoples (cf. Is 60:10-11).

In Isaiah’s prophecy, the arrival of foreigners is presented as a source of enrichment: “The abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, and the wealth of the nations shall come to you” (Is 60:5). Indeed, history teaches us that the contribution of migrants and refugees has been fundamental to the social and economic growth of our societies. This continues to be true in our own day. Their work, their youth, their enthusiasm and their willingness to sacrifice, en-

rich the communities that receive them. Yet this contribution could be all the greater, were it optimized and supported by carefully developed programs and initiatives. Enormous potential exists, ready to be harnessed, if only it is given a chance.

Please listen to the following messages of Holy Father:

[Message for Migrants’ and Refugees Day 2022](#)

[Click here for the video](#)



INVITATIONAL

Along the banks of Babylon's rivers, we sat and wept.

Psalm 137

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
For there those who carried us away
captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us
requested mirth,
Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of
Zion!"
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget its skill!
If I do not remember you,
Let my tongue cling to
the roof of my mouth—
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.
Remember, O Lord, against
the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, "Raze it, raze it,
To its very foundation!"
O daughter of Babylon, who
are to be destroyed,
Happy the one who repays you
as you have served us!
Happy the one who takes and dashes
Your little ones against the rock!

WORD OF GOD

Matthew 2:13-15. 19-23 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.



REFLECTION

Today, the Gospel presents us with the Holy Family on the painful journey of exile, seeking refuge in Egypt. Joseph, Mary and Jesus experienced the dramatic condition of refugees, marked by fear, uncertainty and hardship.

That is why, when we fix our gaze on the Holy Family of Nazareth, we think of the tragedy of migrants and refugees who are victims of rejection and exploitation, victims of human trafficking and forced labour. But let us also think of other “exiles”, those exiles who may exist within families.

Jesus wanted to belong to a family that had experienced these difficulties, so that no one would feel excluded from the loving closeness of God.

ASPECTS OF OUR FOUNDERS

There is no specific text that speaks of the pastoral care of migrants in the experience of Father Claret, however, everything he says about the apostolic mission and the need to embrace all people who are brothers and sisters, is for us an indication and orientation that motivates our work and our feelings about how to accompany this reality that is marking the present world from his spirit.

Claret on missions: *“I cannot abandon you, you are my dear brothers...I am motivated to preach by the desire I have to make my neighbours happy. Oh what a great joy it is to give health to the sick, liberty to the prisoner, comfort to the afflicted, and to make the unhappy happy! All this and much more is done by procuring for my neighbour the glory of heaven. It is to preserve him from all evils and to procure for him and to make him enjoy all good things..”* (PC Aut. 208, 213)

We want to evoke M. Antonia Paris’ experience of crossing the ocean on her journey to Cuba. Her confidence and dedication connect us with the painful experiences of people who cross seas, oceans and mountains to pursue their dream, to pursue a desire to improve their lives. Reading this text, let us commend those who sometimes alone set out on this adventure and pray for those who collaborate to help and facilitate these journeys.

Antonia Paris, inland to Cuba: “*The memory of the dangers from which God had delivered us, increased my hope in my God more and more. This hope that God has placed in my heart from my earliest years has delivered me from so many dangers, and I rejoiced so much in the hope of God that when I lost sight of the Canary Islands, my heart rejoiced, because now that I had lost sight of the land, only the hope of God remained*”. (MP Aut. 158)

COMMENTARY

- Father Claret experienced the great love for humanity and his desire that all could be worthy of a happy life.
- M. Antonia Paris' made an experience of trust and hope in Divine Providence, leaving her native land with courage to respond to God's call. Despite the difficulties of this long journey, she did not feel abandoned by His Divine Majesty.

With these sentiments we unite in the singing of the Magnificat

INTENTIONS

1. For your Church born at Pentecost, in the diversity of cultures: may it welcome migrants and refugees and create real communion. We pray to you, Lord.

R/ Lord hear us

2. May refugees who have fled their country find peace and security. We pray to you, Lord.

R/ Lord hear us

3. That refugees and migrants be helped on the path of integral development so that all may lead a dignified life and freely live their faith.

R/ Lord hear us

4. For migrants who have died on the way to exile; for victims of human trafficking and smuggling.

R/ Lord hear us

5. For the Church and people of goodwill, that they may commit themselves to transforming the world into a family in which each person is involved and finds his or her place. We pray to you, Lord.

R/ Lord hear us

ACTIONS

For the welfare of migrants and refugees, we must:

- Treat them with love and compassion.
- Facilitate employment with decent working conditions and fair pay.
- Provide education and skills development.
- Help them learn the local language and culture.
- Work to eliminate xenophobia among the local population.
- Assisting with return and reintegration in the country of origin.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, make us bearers of hope so that,
where there is darkness, your light reign and
where there is resignation, confidence in the future may be reborn.

Lord, make us instruments of your justice, so that
where there is exclusion, brotherhood may flourish,
and where there is greed, sharing may flourish.

Lord, make us builders of your Kingdom
with migrants and refugees

Lord, teach us how beautiful it is
to live as brothers and sisters.

Amen.

