

mage: Caravaggio, Madonna Di Loreto

TEACHING and LITURGY PLANNING guide for

IMMIGRATION SUNDAY MN

FEAST OF OUR LORD'S EPIPHANY

JANUARY 3, 2016

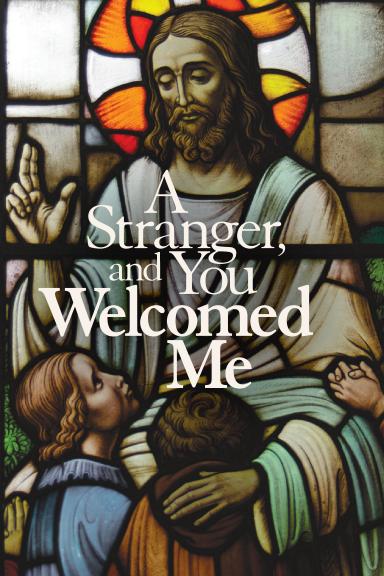
USCCB National Migration Week January 3-9, 2016





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prayer for Our Immigrant Sisters and Brothers	3
Background and Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration	7-15
Gospel Foundations	7
Papal Teachings	8
2016 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees	9
Minnesota Catholic Bishops Immigration Statement	12
Liturgy Guide	
Readings	
General Intercessions	17
Music	
Reading Reflections	20-23
Isaiah 60:1-6	
Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6	21
Matthew 2:1-12	22



PADRE AMOROSO,

Oramos para que les brindes tu divina protección a todos los migrantes,

en especial a aquellos que deben dejar sus hogares debido a la guerra o la violencia,

a los que son desarraigados a causa de la degradación ambiental y del cambio climático

o cuya pobreza material los empuja a buscar oportunidades en otro lugar.

Muéstranos la manera de acercarnos a estas poblaciones vulnerables

y ayudarles a empezar una nueva vida en un nuevo hogar.

Abre nuestro corazón para que podamos ofrecerle hospitalidad

a todo aquel que viene en busca de un refugio.

Concédenos la valentía para acoger a todo extranjero

como si fuera Cristo en medio de nosotros.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo, Nuestro Señor, quien vive y reina contigo, en unidad del Espíritu Santo,

un solo Dios, por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.

LOVING FATHER,

we pray that you provide your divine protection to all migrants,

particularly those who are driven from their homes due to war or violence,

who are uprooted due to environmental degradation and climate change,

or whose material poverty pushes them to find opportunities elsewhere.

Show us how we might reach out to these vulnerable populations and help them to begin a new life in a new home. Open our hearts, so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger,

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

as Christ in our midst.





BACKGROUND

Since 2009, the Catholic bishops of Minnesota have designated the Feast of Our Lord's Epiphany "Immigration Sunday MN" (this year, January 3, 2016). This commemoration coincides with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *National Migration Week 2016*, which takes place January 3–9, 2016 with the theme, "A Stranger and You Welcomed Me." The theme brings to mind the importance of welcoming.

In recent months, we have seen reports about and pictures of thousands of refugees from the Middle East, primarily Syrians, fleeing the conflict in their nation and searching for protection and survival in other countries. Regardless of their religious affiliation or national origin, these refugees are all human persons—made in the image of God, bearing inherent dignity, and deserving our respect, care, and protection from persecution.

In the Gospel of Matthew (25:35), Jesus tells his disciples, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." The migrant, who moves from one country to another, is truly a stranger in the midst. As Christians, we need to approach the phenomenon of migration with open hearts and open minds to welcome these strangers.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON IMMIGRATION

The bishops' position on immigration and migrating persons is firmly rooted in the Social Doctrine of the Church, comprising: the teachings of the Gospel; the Catechism; and papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

Both the Old and New Testaments tell compelling stories of refugees forced to flee because of oppression. Exodus tells the story of the Chosen People, Israel, who were victims of slavery in Egypt. They were utterly helpless by themselves, but with God's powerful intervention, they were able to escape and take refuge in the desert. For forty years, they lived as wanderers. Finally, God fulfilled his ancient promise and settled them on the land they could finally call home. The Israelites' experience was so painful and frightening that God ordered his people for all time to have special care for the stranger: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lev 19:33-34)

One need not look further than the life and words of Jesus to understand that people on the move—migrants, immigrants, and refugees—are special in the eyes of God. The New Testament begins with Matthew's story of Joseph and Mary fleeing into Egypt with their newborn son, Jesus.



Our Savior Himself lived as a refugee because His own land was not safe. In His public ministry, Jesus Himself was an itinerant man, moving from place to place, "with nowhere to lay His Head." (Mt 8:20)

Jesus reiterates the Old Testament command to love and care for the stranger, a criterion by which we will be judged: "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) The Apostle Paul asserts the absolute equality of all people before God: "There is neither Jew nor Greek. . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28) In Christ, the human race is one before God, equal in dignity and rights.

When we welcome our immigrant sisters and brothers, we welcome Christ Himself; for in the face of our neighbors, we see the face of Christ. This is made clear in the Gospel of Luke when the disciples, on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-15), become witnesses to the Truth by welcoming the stranger—Christ.

PAPAL TEACHINGS

In the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII established that people have a right to work in order to survive and to support their families. Pope Pius XII, in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia*, reaffirmed that migrants have a right to a life with dignity, and therefore a right to migrate toward that end: "Then, according to the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*, the right of the family to a life worthy of human dignity is recognized. When this happens, migration attains its natural scope...."

In the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII articulated both the right to migrate and the right not to migrate: "Every human being has the right to the freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of their country; and, when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate and take up residence elsewhere."

In the 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI examined at the relationship between mass migration and authentic human development. Pope Benedict highlighted the "significant contribution" that migrants give to their host countries through their labor, and warns against treating migrant people as commodities. All human beings are endowed with basic human rights. Pope Benedict noted the important relationship among poverty, unemployment, and the dignity of work. Any authentic form of development should focus on creating conditions that enable people to both find work in their community and provide educational opportunities for their children.

Pope Francis continued Pope Benedict XVI's themes in a 2013 homily on the Italian island of Lampedusa, reminding us that we have become "a society that has forgotten the experience of weeping, of 'suffering with" displaced persons seeking a better life for their families. He called on us to ask the Lord to "wipe out [whatever attitude] of Herod remains in our hearts" and to ask for the grace to "weep over our indifference, to weep over the cruelty in the world, in ourselves, and even in those who anonymously make socio-economic decisions that open [the] way to tragedies" that erect barriers to authentic human development for our migrant brothers and sisters.



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (January 17, 2016)

Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us. The Response of the Gospel of Mercy

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Bull of indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy I noted that "at times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives" (*Misericordiae Vultus*, 3). God's love is meant to reach out to each and every person. Those who welcome the Father's embrace, for their part, become so many other open arms and embraces, enabling every person to feel loved like a child and "at home" as part of the one human family. God's fatherly care extends to everyone, like the care of a shepherd for his flock, but it is particularly concerned for the needs of the sheep who are wounded, weary, or ill. Jesus told us that the Father stoops to help those overcome by physical or moral poverty; the more serious their condition, the more powerfully is his divine mercy revealed.

In our time, migration is growing worldwide. Refugees and people fleeing from their homes challenge individuals and communities, and their traditional ways of life; at times, they upset the cultural and social horizons, which they encounter. Increasingly, the victims of violence and poverty, leaving their homelands, are exploited by human traffickers during their journey towards the dream of a better future. If they survive the abuses and hardships of the journey, they then have to face latent suspicions and fear. In the end, they frequently encounter a lack of clear and practical policies regulating the acceptance of migrants and providing for short or long-term programmes of integration respectful of the rights and duties of all. Today, more than in the past, the Gospel of mercy troubles our consciences, prevents us from taking the suffering of others for granted, and points out way of responding which, grounded in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, find practical expression in works of spiritual and corporal mercy.

In the light of these facts, I have chosen as the theme of the 2016 World Day of Migrants and Refugees: *Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us. The Response of the Gospel of Mercy.* Migration movements are now a structural reality, and our primary issue must be to deal with the present emergency phase by providing programmes, which address the causes of migration and the changes it entails, including its effect on the makeup of societies and peoples. The tragic stories of millions of men and women daily confront the international community as a result of the outbreak of unacceptable humanitarian crises in different parts of the world. Indifference and silence lead to complicity whenever we stand by as people are dying of suffocation, starvation, violence, and shipwreck. Whether large or small in scale, these are always tragedies, even when a single human life is lost.



Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unjust distribution of the planet's resources, which are meant to be equitably shared by all. Don't we all want a better, more decent and prosperous life to share with our loved ones?

At this moment in human history, marked by great movements of migration, identity is not a secondary issue. Those who migrate are forced to change some of their most distinctive characteristics and, whether they like or not, even those who welcome them are also forced to change. How can we experience these changes not as obstacles to genuine development, rather as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth, a growth which respects and promotes those values which make us ever more humane and help us to live a balanced relationship with God, others and creation?

The presence of migrants and refugees seriously challenges the various societies, which accept them. Those societies are faced with new situations, which could create serious hardship unless they are suitably motivated, managed, and regulated. How can we ensure that integration will become mutual enrichment, open up positive perspectives to communities, and prevent the danger of discrimination, racism, extreme nationalism, or xenophobia?

Biblical revelation urges us to welcome the stranger; it tells us that in so doing, we open our doors to God, and that in the faces of others we see the face of Christ himself. Many institutions, associations, movements and groups, diocesan, national and international organizations are experiencing the wonder and joy of the feast of encounter, sharing, and solidarity. They have heard the voice of Jesus Christ: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (*Rev* 3:20). Yet there continue to be debates about the conditions and limits to be set for the reception of migrants, not only on the level of national policies, but also in some parish communities whose traditional tranquility seems to be threatened.

Faced with these issues, how can the Church fail to be inspired by the example and words of Jesus Christ? The answer of the Gospel is mercy.

In the first place, mercy is a gift of God the Father who is revealed in the Son. God's mercy gives rise to joyful gratitude for the hope, which opens up before us in the mystery of our redemption by Christ's blood. Mercy nourishes and strengthens solidarity towards others as a necessary response to God's gracious love, "which has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (*Rom* 5:5). Each of us is responsible for his or her neighbour: we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. Concern for fostering good relationships with others and the ability to overcome prejudice and fear are essential ingredients for promoting the culture of encounter, in which we are not only prepared to give, but also to receive from others. Hospitality, in fact, grows from both giving and receiving.

From this perspective, it is important to view migrants not only on the basis of their status as regular or irregular, but above all as people whose dignity is to be protected and who are capable



of contributing to progress and the general welfare. This is especially the case when they responsibly assume their obligations towards those who receive them, gratefully respecting the material and spiritual heritage of the host country, obeying its laws and helping with its needs. Migrations cannot be reduced merely to their political and legislative aspects, their economic implications, and the concrete coexistence of various cultures in one territory. All these complement the defense and promotion of the human person, the culture of encounter, and the unity of peoples, where the Gospel of mercy inspires and encourages ways of renewing and transforming the whole of humanity.

The Church stands at the side of all who work to defend each person's right to live with dignity, first and foremost by exercising the right not to emigrate and to contribute to the development of one's country of origin. This process should include, from the outset, the need to assist the countries, which migrants and refugees leave. This will demonstrate that solidarity, cooperation, international interdependence and the equitable distribution of the earth's goods are essential for more decisive efforts, especially in areas where migration movements begin, to eliminate those imbalances, which lead people, individually or collectively, to abandon their own natural and cultural environment. In any case, it is necessary to avert, if possible at the earliest stages, the flight of refugees and departures as a result of poverty, violence and persecution.

Public opinion also needs to be correctly formed, not least to prevent unwarranted fears and speculations detrimental to migrants.

No one can claim to be indifferent in the face of new forms of slavery imposed by criminal organizations, which buy and sell men, women, and children as forced labourers in construction, agriculture, fishing or in other markets. How many minors are still forced to fight in militias as child soldiers! How many people are victims of organ trafficking, forced begging and sexual exploitation! Today's refugees are fleeing from these aberrant crimes, and they appeal to the Church and the human community to ensure that, in the outstretched hand of those who receive them, they can see the face of the Lord, "the Father of mercies and God of all consolation" (2 *Cor* 1:3).

Dear brothers and sisters, migrants and refugees! At the heart of the Gospel of mercy, the encounter and acceptance by others are intertwined with the encounter and acceptance of God himself. Welcoming others means welcoming God in person! Do not let yourselves be robbed of the hope and joy of life born of your experience of God's mercy, as manifested in the people you meet on your journey! I entrust you to the Virgin Mary, Mother of migrants and refugees, and to Saint Joseph, who experienced the bitterness of emigration to Egypt. To their intercession, I also commend those who invest so much energy, time and resources to the pastoral and social care of migrants. To all I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, September 12, 2015, Memorial of the Holy Name of Mary



IMMIGRATION STATEMENT FROM THE MINNESOTA CATHOLIC BISHOPS

"Unlocking the Gate in Our Hearts"

A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota on the Need for Federal Immigration Reform

March 2012

We, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, are deeply concerned about the nation's immigration policy. It is inconsistent, ineffective, and does not promote the common good.

The lack of an effective, coherent national policy has led to the introduction of many bills in state legislatures around the country, including in Minnesota, that seek to address the complex issue of immigration.

Such bills are a response to the failure of the current federal immigration laws and regulations to halt illegal immigration and the resulting economic, social, and fiscal impact this has had on many state and local governments.

Enforcement-focused state legislation, however, often divides immigrant families and criminalizes the efforts of those who work with immigrants. State legislation cannot repair a failed national policy.

Thus, we seek to reiterate our support for comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level, as well as propose the relevant principles that should guide those reforms.

We recognize that finding solutions to the plight of immigrants today will sometimes necessitate the overcoming of boundaries in the heart, not just on the land. People erect walls for protection when they feel threatened.

At some point, however, we must reach out to human persons in need, and the demands of our common human nature compel us to open a gate in the wall, so that what human dignity demands is not denied to a sister or brother. But before a gate finds its way into the walls outside, there must be a gate that opens in the heart.

This is what the Good Samaritan did: without denying the differences that kept Jews and Samaritans apart, he gave the assistance that was demanded of him by the universal law of love-the law of our common humanity—by supplying the basic human needs of a poor stranger.

Like the Samaritan, we must see all people, including immigrants and undocumented workers who may be different from us, as children made in the image and likeness of God, and fashion our response to their needs accordingly.



Pursuing Life, Liberty, and Happiness While Recognizing Obligations

The Church's perspective on immigration is rooted in her teaching that every human person is created in God's image and has God-given dignity, rights, and duties.

America's founders properly understood that human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are universal and inalienable. Governments merely recognize and respect these rights; they do not create them.

The human right to life—the foundation of every other right—implies the right to emigrate. A dignified existence that preserves life requires food, shelter, clothing, and economic opportunity. Political instability, economic distress, religious persecution, or other conditions that offend basic human dignity may require one to seek these basic necessities in another country.

The right to emigrate, however, is not absolute. Immigrants are obliged to respect and abide by the laws and traditions of the countries in which they come to reside, and must work toward building solidarity with citizens of their new country of residence.

Catholic teaching also recognizes the sovereignty of nations to secure their borders and make decisions about the identity and number of immigrants they allow into their countries. Our government has the duty to consider immigration's impact on the domestic economy and our national security. Yet, we must always make sure that we are not exaggerating these concerns in ways that deny the basic humanitarian needs of good people seeking refuge in our country.

It is often true that undocumented workers may break immigration laws to come to the United States. We wish to emphasize that a concern for upholding the law supports the common good. But it is also true that laws that undermine human dignity, separate families, and which prevent the exercise of basic human rights are unjust laws in need of reform. Good laws should not and need not exclude the possibility of mercy.

The United States is a nation of immigrants and our unique historical experience shows the important contributions—social, cultural, and economic—that immigrants have made and continue to make to American society. Although immigrants have not always been received with hospitality, Minnesotans, like all Americans, have a responsibility to comfort and welcome the stranger in their midst.

Principled Immigration Policy

We believe, with our brother bishops around the country, that policy proposals in this complex area should be assessed by five key principles:



- Persons have the right to seek economic opportunities in their homeland; conditions ought to be such that persons can work and support their families in dignity and safety;
- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families when they are unable to find work and therefore are unable to support their families at home;
- Sovereign nations have a right to protect and control their borders for the common good;
- · Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection; and
- The human rights and human dignity of all persons, including undocumented immigrants, should be respected.

In addition, any just immigration policy should also:

- Uphold the human dignity of all persons and work against any injustice that compromises the dignity of immigrants;
- Promote and give priority to the reunification of families; and
- Recognize the rich contribution to the community by those immigrants and migrants who work and live here.

These Catholic moral principles are consistent with America's founding ideals and aspirations to be one nation under God, a people made up of many races and creeds.

Based on these principles the American bishops support comprehensive immigration policy reform that secures our national borders and provides undocumented immigrants the opportunity to earn permanent residency and eventual citizenship.

Such reform should include:

- an earned legalization program for foreign nationals of good moral character;
- policies designed to keep families together;
- a revamped temporary worker program that protects both the workers who come to the United States and U.S.-citizen workers;
- the restoration of immigrants' due process rights; and
- an effort to meaningfully address the root cause of migration, such as underdevelopment and poverty in countries of immigrant origin.

Moreover, such reform would include the targeted, proportionate, and humane enforcement of immigration laws.

Taking Action

Legislation at the state level cannot achieve necessary reform of national policy. Such legislation also could result in conflicting laws among the states that could lead to the abuse of human rights,



disruptions of families in ways that adversely affect children, and send a message of hostility when Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger, and to love others as He has loved us.

The more fruitful approach would be for public officials in our state, and all of us as citizens, to petition Congress and the President to courageously enact comprehensive immigration reform.

We encourage members of the Minnesota Legislature to reject any measures that are in opposition to the fundamental human dignity of immigrants—especially the undocumented; and we encourage the Minnesota congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to work for just and compassionate reform of the nation's immigration system.

Finally, we ask that people join us in prayer to God for a just, yet merciful solution to the plight of immigrants in our country.

Sincerely,

Bishop of Duluth

The Most Rev. John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
The Most Rev. John F. Kinney
Bishop of St. Cloud
The Most Rev. John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm
The Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona
The Most Rev. Paul D. Sirba

The Most Rev. Michael J. Hoeppner
Bishop of Crookston
The Most Rev. Lee A. Piché
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
The Most Rev. Harry J. Flynn
Archbishop Emeritus of St. Paul and Minneapolis
The Most. Rev. Victor H. Balke
Bishop Emeritus of Crookston
The Most Rev. Bernard J. Harrington
Bishop Emeritus of Winona

ADDITIONAL IMMIGRATION STATEMENTS FROM THE U.S. BISHOPS

During the past several years, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and the Bishops of Minnesota have come out with a number of statements together and individually that address the issue of immigration in the state.

For archived immigration statements, a copy of a 2014 editorial on federal immigration reform from your local bishop, and a testimonial from a Minnesota Catholic family at risk of separation because of current U.S. immigration policy, visit the MCC Immigration Sunday MN page (www.mncc.org/advocacy-areas/migration/immigration-sunday-mn/).



For the most recent statements and resources from the USCCB on immigration, including the September 10 statement from Archbishop Kurtz on the Syrian Refugee crisis (http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-127.cfm), visit the USCCB's *Justice for Immigrants* website (http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org).

LITURGY GUIDE

"Jesus speaks in silence in the Mystery of the Eucharist and every time reminds us that to follow Him means to come out of ourselves and make of our own lives, not a possession, but a gift to Him and to others."

- Pope Francis, May 31, 2013

READINGS

First Reading: Isaiah 60: 1-6

Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; But upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: Your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses. Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; All from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

Responsorial: Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Second Reading: Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6

If, as I suppose, you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's



appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

GENERAL INTERCESSION EXAMPLES

For immigrants, migrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that our parish and parishioners be the loving "face of Christ" for them in their time of fear, uncertainty, and need.

For our immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking sisters and brothers, may they help to build harmonious and healthy communities wherever they may live.

For Pope Francis, Arch(bishop)______, priests, deacons, women religious, and missionaries, that they may have the strength and fortitude to lead and guide us as agents of God's mercy, justice, and love for immigrants and all vulnerable people.

For our political leaders and public servants, that they may implement and support policies that promote family unity and reunification, and that uphold the basic rights and human dignity of every person.

For our community gathered here today, that as we build and deepen our relationship with Christ we may come to a greater understanding of our vocation to love, and that this understanding helps transform our relationships as sources of the light of Christ in the world.

For unaccompanied migrant children, and for the migrant women and their children who are seeking asylum and being held in detention centers at the U.S. borders, that they may be protected from harm and abuse, and that they are ultimately reunited with loving family.

For migrant workers, that they may work in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labor may be truly grateful for and respect what they provide to our communities and broader economies.

For the victims and buyers of forced labor and all forms of human trafficking, that they recognize the God-given dignity of every human being and help break the cycle of slavery for themselves and others.

For an end to the violence, poverty, and despair that displace so many of our sisters and brothers from their homes and homelands, especially in Syria and in Central American countries that are currently plagued with violence.



For all of our ancestors who have gone before us in search of safety and work, and for the repose of their souls.

MUSIC IDEAS

Following are some music examples that could be fitting for your Statewide Immigration Sunday celebration.

Mass setting and general resources:

- Missa ad Gentes: Maryknoll Centennial Mass, Michael Joncas, GIA Publications Various movements of this mass setting musically represent both the Maryknoll community's United States heritage and the diverse cultures in which Maryknoll missioners serve—cultures that represent some of our most vibrant immigrant communities in this country. Cultural influences represented in the settings include Portuguese, Hispanic, Russian, and Asian. The text also incorporates Latin, which allows us to celebrate our common heritage and unity as Catholics.
- Library of Gregorian chant propers: For those parish communities that have a resurging interest in older sacred music traditions, visit the "Christmastide" section under "Epiphany-Jan. 6" at the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest website (www.institute-christ-king.org/latin-mass-resources/sacred-music/).

Other suggestions:

Gathering Song

- O Sanctissima/O Most Virtuous
- Sing a New Church, Nettleton, OCP Publications
- Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ, Jaime Cortez, OCP Publications

Responsorial Psalm

- Every Nation on Earth (Ps. 72), Michael Joncas, GIA Publications
- Lord, Every Nation, Jesse Manibusan, OCP Publications

Alleluia

• Celtic Alleluia, Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker: Alternative verse for the Feast of the Epiphany: A holy day has dawned.

Adore the Lord, you nations, for today a light has come on the earth.

Preparation of the Gifts

- Bread of Life (Advent/Christmas setting) Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- Let Us Be Bread, Thomas J. Porter, GIA Publications, Inc.



• Ubi Caritas/Where Love Is

Eucharistic Song

- Here I Am, Lord, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- Lead Us to Your Table, Tom Tomaszek and Steve Angrisano, OCP Publications
- Adoro te Devote (I Devoutly Adore You)
- Panis Angelicum (Bread of Angels)

Recessional

- Christ, Be Our Light, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- City of God, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- Lead Me Lord, John Becker, OCP Publications
- We Are Called to Serve, Julie and Tim Smith, Resource Publications



READING REFLECTIONS

For background on federal and state immigration reform and policy, as well as the statistics on current migrant populations in the United States, particularly in Minnesota, to incorporate into your homily, visit the MCC Immigration Sunday MN page (http://www.mncc.org/advocacy-areas/migration/immigration-sunday-mn/).

First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

This text from Isaiah speaks of the new Jerusalem—a time and a place where the glory of the Lord shines. God's presence within this city brings an extraordinary illumination, and nations are drawn to this light. This new Jerusalem is not one nation or one city. Rather, it is a place and a people that are in full knowledge of and in communion with the Lord, and who have learned to walk by the light of Christ. No nation can claim this title, and no people have yet learned what it means to live in right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of God's creation. Yet the images and the movements of this text point to ways in which we as a people—as a community, state, or nation—can walk in God's paths, thereby letting the Lord's light shine through us.

Isaiah's reference to "nations," and to sons and daughters coming from afar, can lead us to think of people coming to our country today with a similar hope. They come not because our country is the new Jerusalem—far from it. But, they do come here with the <u>hope</u> of finding something better—something safer, more peaceful.

Today in the United States there are more than 40 million foreign-born residents. Some are naturalized citizens; others are trying to moving along the path to citizenship. Some are here as students; others are here for employment reasons.

Whatever their legal status, the majority of immigrants in the United States are here because they seek a better life for their families—not a life of luxury or a life of conspicuous consumption, nor a life dependent upon handouts, but a life simply of steady work, sustainable wages, and safety. In his 2016 message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis challenges communities and people who receive immigrants. He asks them to consider their new presence as an opportunity for "genuine human, social and spiritual growth, a growth which respects and promotes those values which make us ever more humane and help us to live a balanced relationship with God, others and creation."

Isaiah and other prophets in the Old Testament frequently remind the Hebrew people that they must show particular love and care for widows, orphans, and strangers—which, today, can often be a migrant family or a person new to our community. To be in right relationship with God requires that



we are in right relationship with each other—which includes our call to show mercy, compassion, or assistance to the most vulnerable among us.

If the glory of the Lord is ever to shine among us, one of the challenges we must address in our society is where we fall short of helping our most vulnerable. Ironically, we can be guided in this task by the migrants we are called to help. Isaiah states: *Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.* (Isaiah 60:5) Our openness to the "other" has enormous opportunity to enrich our lives.

Second Reading: *Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6*

From his prison cell, St. Paul writes to the Christian community at Ephesus about the mystery that has been made known to him by the Spirit: that through the Gospel the gentiles are heirs with Israel, members together in the one body and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus. It is this mystery that had Paul writing earlier to the Christians at Galatia: *there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* (Gal. 3:28)

The power of this message is that, as members of Christ's body, we all share in Christ's promise of a restored relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. Our sharing in the promise of salvation is a primary source of our dignity as human beings. It is why we need to live as a people redeemed, as a people marked by a sacred dignity. It is why we need to help one another realize our human dignity, which includes recognizing or meeting the basic needs of others that ensure their human dignity is upheld.

The Second Vatican Council fathers remind us that our sharing in Christ Jesus' promise of salvation is not just about looking beyond this world at what is to come. On the contrary: "... the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family ... a body which already is a foreshadowing of the life that is to come." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39) In other words, we are called to "make Thy Kingdom come," here on earth.

We do not need to look far for evidence that not all of God's children have attained a dignified life that is rightfully theirs as "made in the image and likeness of God." A dearth of economic opportunity confronting large segments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere is placing significant strain on families and often presents them with very difficult choices. In Syria, forced migration is occurring on an epic scale, with Chaldean Catholics being persecuted for their religious



beliefs, and being effectively wiped out in Iraq and the Middle East as the world sits watching. There are also those from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, where the outbreak of gang violence has forced the migration of thousands of unaccompanied migrant children, and mothers with young children, who are fleeing from their violent communities for safety.

These refugees remind us how far we, as followers of Christ, are asked to go in welcoming the stranger among us. As St. Paul writes, we are one body, one Church, and no one should feel like a stranger. To be the Church is to recognize our unity in Christ. It is to welcome and recognize the human dignity and basic needs of new and old members in our communities—whoever she is, wherever he comes from, whatever their family's legal status.

If we are people who celebrate the Good News that everyone shares in the promise of Christ Jesus, we would not tolerate words or actions or public policies that diminish the human dignity or, in effect, create an underclass of immigrant people in our country.

We would recognize that "just laws" are not only laws that protect our border and ensure our nation's or our family's security, but that "just laws" are also laws that uphold the dignity and basic human needs of *all* families—that ensure basic access to healthcare for all children, that ensure access to sustainable work, that ensure access to food and a safe place to sleep. Anything less is our failure to respond to people in need: *Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.* (Mt. 25:40) Anything less is a failure to recognize that within our immigrant community there *grows the body of a new human family . . . a body which already is a foreshadowing of the life that is to come.* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39)

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

The second chapter of Matthew's Gospel is filled with motion, with people on the move. Wise men from the East arrive in Jerusalem, asking where the newborn king of the Jews might be found. King Herod sends them to Bethlehem to find the child. After locating the child and offering their gifts, the wise men take a different road to their own country in order to avoid Herod. Then, in the verse immediately following this reading, an angel of the Lord warns Joseph to flee with the infant child and his mother to Egypt—where the Holy Family live as refugees until Herod's death allows them to return to their homeland, Israel.

This story of the visit of the wise men leading to the eventual flight of the Holy Family into Egypt is one that too many of God's children can recognize as their own. Today, there are millions of refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the world—people who have had to flee their homeland



because of war, religious persecution, brutal gang violence, and risks of modern-day slavery. These are people whose journey was not of their choosing but one day became a requirement for their continued living.

We know so well the story of the three kings, the three wise men who came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Some of our favorite Christmas carols celebrate this event, as do most Christmas pageants in Catholic elementary schools. This is the story of today's Gospel reading, Matthew 2:1-12.

Yet, we rarely think about what comes next, in verse 13: Joseph, Mary, and their infant son fleeing for their lives, becoming refugees in Egypt. The story of the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt parallels the story of many modern day immigrants and refugees—currently, the Syrian Christian and Central American children and families fleeing from harm's way are just two examples.

Long before Matthew wrote about Joseph and Mary fleeing with their child into Egypt, another story was told. The Hebrew prophets spoke of the widows, the orphans, and the strangers—the people of that culture who were most vulnerable and most in need of help. The Torah itself provided the explanation for why the Hebrew people—and we, now followers of Christ—must treat with compassion the refugee and every immigrant: *You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.* (Leviticus 19:34)