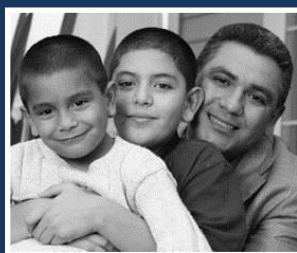


Resource and Liturgy Planning Guide



**MN IMMIGRATION SUNDAY • FEAST OF OUR LORD'S EPIPHANY
JANUARY 5, 2014**



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

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PRAYER FOR OUR IMMIGRANT SISTERS AND BROTHERS

BLESSED ARE YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST.
YOU CROSSED EVERY BORDER
BETWEEN DIVINITY AND HUMANITY
TO MAKE YOUR HOME WITH US.
HELP US TO WELCOME YOU IN NEWCOMERS,
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES.

BLESSED ARE YOU, GOD OF ALL NATIONS.
YOU BLESS OUR LAND RICHLY
WITH GOODS OF CREATION
AND PEOPLE MADE IN YOUR IMAGE.
GRANT THAT WE WILL BE STEWARDS AND PEACEMAKERS,
WHO LIVE AS YOUR CHILDREN.

BLESSED ARE YOU, HOLY SPIRIT.
YOU WORK IN THE HEARTS OF ALL
TO BRING ABOUT HARMONY AND GOODWILL.
STRENGTHEN US IN HUMAN SOLIDARITY
AND IN HOPE.

GOD OF ALL PEOPLE, GRANT US VISION
TO SEE YOUR PRESENCE IN OUR MIDST,
ESPECIALLY IN OUR IMMIGRANT SISTERS AND BROTHERS.
GIVE US COURAGE
TO OPEN THE DOOR TO OUR NEIGHBORS
AND GRACE TO BUILD A SOCIETY OF JUSTICE.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON IMMIGRATION

The Catholic position on immigration and people on the move is firmly rooted in the Church's social teaching, which is comprised of: the Gospels and the words of Christ; Papal Encyclicals and Statements; and Bishops' Statements and Pastoral Letters.

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 with no homeland of their own. Finally, God fulfilled his ancient promise and settled them on the land that 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." (Leviticus 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." (Matthew 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 (Luke 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 to survive, and to support their families. Pope Pius XII, in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia*, reaffirms 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 clearly articulates 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." Pope John Paul II reaffirmed this basic teaching in an address to the *New World Congress on the Pastoral*

Care of Immigrants in 1985: “Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own country. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to migrate to other countries and to take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive him of membership to the human family, nor of citizenship in the universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men.”

In the 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI looks at the relationship between mass migration and authentic human development. Pope Benedict highlights 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. The Holy Father notes 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.

Catholic scholars often refer generally to a set of papal encyclicals called “social encyclicals.” These documents are meant to address economic and social issues that the world is facing at the time of the encyclical’s publication. While there is no official list, theologians usually include the following documents:

- ***Rerum novarum***, Pope Leo XIII, May 15, 1891
- ***Quadregisima anno***, Pope Pius XII, May 15, 1931
- ***Mater et magistra***, Pope John XXIII, May 15, 1961
- ***Pacem in terris***, Pope John XXIII, April 11, 1963
- ***Populorum progressio***, Pope Paul VI, March 26, 1967
- ***Laborem exercens***, Pope John Paul II, September 14, 1981
- ***Sollicitudo rei socialis***, Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1987
- ***Centisimus annus***, Pope John Paul II, May 1, 1991
- ***Caritas in veritate***, Pope Benedict XVI, June 29, 2009

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (January 19, 2014)

Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our societies are experiencing, in an unprecedented way, processes of mutual interdependence and interaction on the global level. While not lacking problematic or negative elements, these processes are aimed at improving the living conditions of the human family, not only economically, but politically and culturally as well. Each individual is a part of humanity and, with the entire family of peoples, shares the hope of a better future. This consideration inspired the theme I have chosen for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees this year: Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World.

In our changing world, the growing phenomenon of human mobility emerges, to use the words of Pope Benedict XVI, as a “sign of the times” (cf. Message for the 2006 World Day of Migrants and Refugees). While it is true that migrations often reveal failures and shortcomings on the part of States and the international community, they also point to the aspiration of humanity to enjoy a unity marked by respect for differences, by attitudes of acceptance and hospitality which enable an equitable sharing of the world’s goods, and by the protection and the advancement of the dignity and centrality of each human being.

From the Christian standpoint, the reality of migration, like other human realities, points to the tension between the beauty of creation, marked by Grace and the Redemption, and the mystery of sin. Solidarity, acceptance, and signs of fraternity and understanding exist side by side with rejection, discrimination, trafficking and exploitation, suffering and death. Particularly disturbing are those situations where migration is not only involuntary, but actually set in motion by various forms of human trafficking and enslavement. Nowadays, “slave labour” is common coin! Yet despite the problems, risks and difficulties to be faced, great numbers of migrants and refugees continue to be inspired by confidence and hope; in their hearts they long for a better future, not only for themselves but for their families and those closest to them.

What is involved in the creation of “a better world”? The expression does not allude naively to abstract notions or unattainable ideals; rather, it aims at an authentic and integral development, at efforts to provide dignified living conditions for everyone, at finding just responses to the needs of individuals and families, and at ensuring that God’s gift of creation is respected, safeguarded and cultivated. The Venerable Paul VI described the aspirations of people today in this way: “to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases and steady employment... to exercise greater personal responsibility; to do more, to learn more, and have more, in order to be more” (*Populorum Progressio*, 6).

Our hearts do desire something “more”. Beyond greater knowledge or possessions, they want to “be” more. Development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone, often attained without a thought for the poor and the vulnerable. A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; if human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; if no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:31-46); if we can prove capable of leaving behind a throwaway culture and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.

Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more. The sheer number of people migrating from one continent to another, or shifting places within their own countries and geographical areas, is striking. Contemporary movements of migration represent the largest movement of individuals, if not of peoples, in history. As the Church accompanies migrants and refugees on their journey, she seeks to understand the causes of migration, but she also works to overcome its negative effects, and to maximize its positive influence on the communities of origin, transit and destination.

While encouraging the development of a better world, we cannot remain silent about the scandal of poverty in its various forms. Violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups: these are some of the chief elements of poverty which need to be overcome. Often these are precisely the elements which mark migratory movements, thus linking migration to poverty. Fleeing from situations of extreme poverty or persecution in the hope of a better future, or simply to save their own lives, millions of persons choose to migrate. Despite their hopes and expectations, they often encounter mistrust, rejection and exclusion, to say nothing of tragedies and disasters which offend their human dignity.

The reality of migration, given its new dimensions in our age of globalization, needs to be approached and managed in a new, equitable and effective manner; more than anything, this calls for international cooperation and a spirit of profound solidarity and compassion. Cooperation at different levels is critical, including the broad adoption of policies and rules aimed at protecting and promoting the human person. Pope Benedict XVI sketched the parameters of such policies, stating that they “should set out from close collaboration between the migrants’ countries of origin and their countries of destination; they should be accompanied by adequate international norms able to coordinate different legislative systems with a view to safeguarding the needs and rights of individual migrants and their families, and at the same time, those of the host countries” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 62). Working together for a better world requires that countries help one another, in a spirit of willingness and trust, without raising insurmountable barriers. A good synergy can be a source of encouragement to government leaders as they confront socioeconomic imbalances and an unregulated globalization, which are among some of the causes of migration movements in which individuals are more

victims than protagonists. No country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration.

It must also be emphasized that such cooperation begins with the efforts of each country to create better economic and social conditions at home, so that emigration will not be the only option left for those who seek peace, justice, security and full respect of their human dignity. The creation of opportunities for employment in the local economies will also avoid the separation of families and ensure that individuals and groups enjoy conditions of stability and serenity.

Finally, in considering the situation of migrants and refugees, I would point to yet another element in building a better world, namely, the elimination of prejudices and presuppositions in the approach to migration. Not infrequently, the arrival of migrants, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees gives rise to suspicion and hostility. There is a fear that society will become less secure, that identity and culture will be lost, that competition for jobs will become stiffer and even that criminal activity will increase. The communications media have a role of great responsibility in this regard: it is up to them, in fact, to break down stereotypes and to offer correct information in reporting the errors of a few as well as the honesty, rectitude and goodness of the majority. A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world. The communications media are themselves called to embrace this “conversion of attitudes” and to promote this change in the way migrants and refugees are treated.

I think of how even the Holy Family of Nazareth experienced initial rejection: Mary “gave birth to her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (Lk 2:7). Jesus, Mary and Joseph knew what it meant to leave their own country and become migrants: threatened by Herod’s lust for power, they were forced to take flight and seek refuge in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-14). But the maternal heart of Mary and the compassionate heart of Joseph, the Protector of the Holy Family, never doubted that God would always be with them. Through their intercession, may that same firm certainty dwell in the heart of every migrant and refugee.

The Church, responding to Christ’s command to “go and make disciples of all nations”, is called to be the People of God which embraces all peoples and brings to them the proclamation of the Gospel, for the face of each person bears the mark of the face of Christ! Here we find the deepest foundation of the dignity of the human person, which must always be respected and safeguarded. It is less the criteria of efficiency, productivity, social class, or ethnic or religious belonging which ground that personal dignity, so much as the fact of being created in God’s own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26-27) and, even more so, being children of God. Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community. Migration can offer possibilities for a new evangelization, open vistas for the growth of a new humanity foreshadowed in the paschal mystery: a humanity for which every foreign country is a homeland and every homeland is a foreign country.

Dear migrants and refugees! Never lose the hope that you too are facing a more secure future, that on your journey you will encounter an outstretched hand, and that you can experience fraternal solidarity and the warmth of friendship! To all of you, and to those who have devoted their lives and their efforts to helping you, I give the assurance of my prayers and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 5 August 2013

FRANCESCO

2012 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,

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
Bishop of Duluth

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 MINNESOTA BISHOPS

Over the past several years, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops 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, visit the "Additional Resources" section of the MCC "Immigration Sunday MN" page (www.mncc.org/additional-resources-immigration-sunday).

LITURGY GUIDE

While the Mass is truly divine, a gift from God, it also includes many human elements, customs, and traditions of various cultures that have become part of the Eucharistic celebration. Through the process of inculturation, Mother Church has admitted practices unique to particular cultures into the liturgy itself, "so long as they harmonize with its true and authentic spirit." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 37)

PLANNING SUGGESTIONS

When preparing the liturgy for Minnesota Statewide Immigration Sunday:

- promote the active participation of all people in your parish community;
- invite leaders of community ethnic groups into your liturgy planning process;
- know and understand the cultural backgrounds of your parishioners; and
- include appropriate cultural influences.

WAYS TO INCLUDE A VARIETY OF LANGUAGES IN YOUR WORSHIP CELEBRATION

- Music
- Responses to General Intercessions
- Lord's Prayer
- Sign of Peace

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 SUGGESTIONS

For immigrants, migrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that they may be welcomed in our parish.

For our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers, that they may remain true to all that is good in their rich traditions and heritage, and help to build harmonious communities wherever they live.

For Pope Benedict XVI, Archbishop Nienstedt, Bishop _____, priests, deacons, women religious, and missionaries, that they may continue to lead, guide, and support the solicitude of the Church towards immigrants and vulnerable populations.

For our political leaders and public servants, that they may implement and support policies that promote family unity and reunification, provide a reasonable and just pathway to citizenship, and maintain safe working conditions for migrant workers, all while protecting our national safety.

For migrants, refugees, and strangers in our community, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love.

For our community, gathered here today to celebrate our unity in Christ, that we may come to a greater understanding and acceptance of our differences.

For unaccompanied migrant children, that they may be protected from all harm and reunited with loving families.

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 what they provide.

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.

MUSIC IDEAS

Here are some song examples that would be fitting for your Statewide Immigration Sunday celebration.

Gathering Song

- ***Sing a New Church***, Nettleton, OCP Publications
- ***Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ***, Jaime Cortez, OCP Publications
- ***O Sanctissima/O Most Virtuous***
—A hymn to the Virgin Mary often sung around Christmas time.

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, Hope for the World***, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- ***Let Us Be Bread***, Thomas J. Porter, GIA Publications, Inc.
- ***Let Us Break Bread Together***, Spiritual, GIA Publications, Inc.
- ***The Lord is My Light***, Christopher Walker, OCP Publications
- ***Ubi Caritas/Where Love Is***
—This refrain dates from at least the early Medieval period, and possibly goes back to even the ancient church.

Eucharistic Song

- ***Cuando Partimos el Pan del Señor/In the Breaking of the Bread***, Bob Hurd and Michael Downey, OCP
- ***Here I Am, Lord***, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- ***Lead Us to Your Table***, Tom Tomaszek and Steve Angrisano, OCP Publications
- ***Ven al Banquete/Come to the Feast***, Bob Hurd, OCP Publications
- ***Adoro te Devote/I Devoutly Adore You***
—A reflection on the Eucharist by St. Thomas Aquinas.
- ***Panis Angelicum/Bread of Angels***
—Another hymn by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Recessional

- ***Christ, Be Our Light***, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- ***City of God***, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- ***Go Light Your World***, Chris Rice, ASCAP
- ***Lead Me Lord***, John Becker, OCP Publications
- ***Malo! Malo! Thanks Be to God***, Jessie Manibusan, OCP Publications
- ***Siyahamba/We Are Marching***, South African, Walton Music Corporation
- ***We Are Called to Serve***, Julie and Tim Smith, Resource Publications

Note: A few of the above hymns are in Latin. At international gatherings such as Papal Masses, Beatifications, and World Youth Days, there are hundreds of languages spoken by the pilgrims who attend. In part, as a gesture of impartiality and of unity, the Church uses Latin. Incorporating some Latin hymns into your parish's Mass is one way to celebrate the universal nature of the Catholic Church.

READING REFLECTIONS

For additional statistics and background on current migrant populations in the United States, particularly in Minnesota, visit the MCC Immigration Sunday MN page (<http://www.mncc.org/immigration-sunday-mn-homily-reflection-notes/>).

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 any place and any people that are full of the knowledge of the Lord and have learned “to walk by your light.” 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 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. They come because they see hope for a better life.

Today in the United States there are 40 million foreign-born residents. Some are naturalized citizens, others are moving along the path to citizenship, and some are here as students, but most are here for employment reasons. Among the immigrant laborers are a large number of undocumented workers.

Whatever their legal status, the vast majority of immigrants in the United States are here because they seek a better life for themselves and their families—not a life of luxury and not a life dependent upon handouts, but a livelihood improved by the prospects of steady work. Their decision to leave their homelands in search of employment is what Pope Benedict XVI called in *Spe Salvi* an act of hope: an action based upon their belief that a better life, a life more befitting human dignity, is possible.

Catholic social teaching regarding immigration offers several points worth considering if we, or any nation, aspire to reflect the new Jerusalem. This teaching begins by acknowledging that all people have the right to have their basic needs met in their homeland. When it is not possible to fulfill those needs at home, people have the right to emigrate to other lands in search of the work they need. This teaching also upholds the right of sovereign nations to control their borders, but such efforts must promote the common good of the universal human family.

For that reason it is important for every nation to review and, when necessary, reform its immigration policies and enforcement practices. In this country, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops urges a comprehensive reform of our immigration policies that includes: expanded opportunities to reunify families, a temporary worker program, and an earned legalization program for undocumented immigrants.

Isaiah and other prophets in the Old Testament frequently remind the Hebrew people that they must show particular love and care for the widows, the orphans, and the strangers. To be in right relationship with their God required that they show mercy and practical assistance to the poor and vulnerable persons among them. At that time and in that place, these were the widows, the orphans, and the strangers.

If the glory of the Lord is ever to shine among us, one of the challenges we must address in our society is that of helping the widows, the orphans, and the strangers of our day. Ironically, we can be guided in this task by the very immigrants 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) The wealth of nations comes to us through the immigrants. They contribute enormously to our economy. Their many customs, languages, and lifestyle enrich our culture beyond measure. Their high regard for the religious and the spiritual is a humbling lesson for us on how to walk in God's paths.

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 other people realize that dignity in which all have a right to partake.

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that our sharing in Christ Jesus' promise of salvation is no cause for failing to respond to peoples' needs in this life. In the Council's words, ". . . 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)

What a beautiful way of calling us to help improve the lives of people who struggle to find that dignified life. Of particular relevance here are the millions of people who leave their homelands to find a better life in ours. These are people whose goal is not a life of luxury and ease, but a simple life in which their hard work can earn for them a reasonably decent life and the hope of a better life for their children. This is the hope that led our own ancestors to America.

The experience of many immigrants in our country is evidence that not all of God's children have attained the dignified life that is rightfully theirs. They remind us as well how far we as a Church have 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 serve the newest member whoever she is, wherever he comes from, whatever their legal status.

If we can do that, then we will stand with our sisters and brothers when their immigrant status leads to the experience of prejudice and discrimination. If we can be the Church, as St. Paul writes, then we will support

undocumented workers when raids by immigration authorities separate families, terrorize children, and sow fear and suspicion in immigrant communities. If we are that Church which celebrates the good news that everyone shares in the promise of Christ Jesus, then we will not tolerate words or actions or national policies that dishonor and hurt immigrants in our country.

Then, too, we will help our nation reform its immigration policies to meet the economic and security needs of our country and to meet the employment and family stability needs of immigrants. Anything less is a 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 communities 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 approximately 16 million refugees throughout the world—people who have had to flee their homeland because of unending war, a fear of persecution, or the threat of death. 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.

By contrast, we rarely think about what comes next in verse 13: Joseph, Mary, and their infant son fleeing for their lives, becoming refugees in Egypt. Yet this is the story of countless people fleeing the suffering and violence of such places as Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, the Congo, Chad, Somalia, and Sudan.

The story of the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt also is the story of contemporary immigrants in general. Every year millions of people need to leave their native countries not only as refugees, but also as persons seeking jobs that will allow them and their families to live a dignified life. Employment is the single greatest reason for immigrants entering the United States.

Their journey daily becomes more hazardous as this nation's immigration reform has been reduced to workplace raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), as well as by increased funding to control our southern border. A 7,000 mile fence now forces immigrants to wander farther into and through the deadly deserts of the Southwest.

Long before Matthew wrote about Joseph and Mary fleeing with their child into Egypt, another story was told about how all of us should respond to immigrants. 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—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)

We today, so long after receiving the Law and the Prophets, could read this text in a profoundly new way: We shall treat the refugee and all immigrants who reside among us no differently than the neighbors born in this country; we shall have the same love for them as for ourselves; for our Lord Jesus also was once a refugee and an immigrant.