



MINNESOTA STATEWIDE IMMIGRATION SUNDAY RESOURCE AND LITURGY PLANNING GUIDE

FEAST OF OUR LORD'S EPIPHANY
JANUARY 6, 2013

*Rise, take the child and his mother, flee
to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you.
- Matthew 2:13*



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On the Cover

Nikolai Andreyevich Koshelev
Flight into Egypt
c. 1890

Oil on Canvas
 Church of the Savior on Spilled Blood,
 St. Petersburg, Russia.

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
- *Quadregesima 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
- *Centesimus annus*, Pope John Paul II, May 1, 1991
- *Caritas in veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI, June 29, 2009

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (January 13, 2013)

Migrations: pilgrimage of faith and hope

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, recalled that “the Church goes forward together with humanity” (No. 40); therefore “the joys and the hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts” (ibid, 1). The Servant of God Paul VI echoed these words when he called the Church an “expert in humanity” (*Populorum Progressio*, 13), as did Blessed John Paul II when he stated that the human person is “the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission... the way traced out by Christ himself” (*Centesimus Annus*, 53). In the footsteps of my predecessors, I sought to emphasize in my Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* that “the whole Church, in all her being and acting—when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity—is engaged in promoting integral human development” (No. 11). I was thinking also of the millions of men and women who, for various reasons, have known the experience of migration. Migration is in fact “a striking phenomenon because of the sheer numbers of people involved, the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to

nations and the international community” (ibid., 62), for “every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance” (ibid.).

For this reason, I have chosen to dedicate the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the theme “Migrations: pilgrimage of faith and hope”, in conjunction with the celebrations marking the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and the sixtieth anniversary of the promulgation of the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia*, and at a time when the whole Church is celebrating the Year of Faith, taking up with enthusiasm the challenge of the new evangelization.

Faith and hope are inseparable in the hearts of many migrants, who deeply desire a better life and not infrequently try to leave behind the “hopelessness” of an unpromising future. During their journey many of them are sustained by the deep trust that God never abandons his children; this certainty makes the pain of their uprooting and separation more tolerable and even gives them the hope of eventually returning to their country of origin. Faith and hope are often among the possessions which emigrants carry with them, knowing that with them, “we can face our present: the present, even if it is arduous, can be lived and accepted if it leads towards a goal, if we can be sure of this goal, and if this goal is great enough to justify the effort of the journey” (*Spe Salvi*, 1).

In the vast sector of migration, the Church shows her maternal concern in a variety of ways. On the one hand, she witnesses the immense poverty and suffering entailed in migration, leading often to painful and tragic situations. This inspires the creation of programmes aimed at meeting emergencies through the generous help of individuals and groups, volunteer associations and movements, parochial and diocesan organizations in cooperation with all people of good will. The Church also works to highlight the positive aspects, the potential and the resources which migrations offer. Along these lines, programmes and centres of welcome have been established to help and sustain the full integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees into a new social and cultural context, without neglecting the religious dimension, fundamental for every person’s life. Indeed, it is to this dimension that the Church, by virtue of the mission entrusted to her by Christ, must devote special attention and care: this is her most important and specific task. For Christians coming from various parts of the world, attention to the religious dimension also entails ecumenical dialogue and the care of new communities, while for the Catholic faithful it involves, among other things, establishing new pastoral structures and showing esteem for the various rites, so as to foster full participation in the life of the local ecclesial community. Human promotion goes side by side with spiritual communion, which opens the way “to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the only Saviour of the world” (*Porta Fidei*, 6). The Church always offers a precious gift when she guides people to an encounter with Christ, which opens the way to a stable and trustworthy hope.

Where migrants and refugees are concerned, the Church and her various agencies ought to avoid offering charitable services alone; they are also called to promote real integration in a society where all are active members and responsible for one another’s welfare, generously offering a creative contribution and rightfully sharing in the same rights and duties. Emigrants bring with them a sense of trust and hope which has inspired and sustained their search for better opportunities in life. Yet they do not seek simply to improve their financial, social and political condition. It is true that the experience of migration often begins in fear, especially when persecutions and violence are its cause, and in the trauma of having to leave behind family and possessions which had in some way ensured survival. But suffering, great losses and at times a sense of disorientation before an uncertain future do not destroy the dream of being able to build, with hope and courage, a new life in a new country. Indeed, migrants trust that they will encounter acceptance, solidarity and help, that they will meet people who sympathize with the distress and tragedy experienced by others, recognize the values and resources the latter have to offer, and are open to sharing humanly and materially with the needy and disadvantaged. It is important to realize that “the reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 43). Migrants and refugees can experience, along with difficulties, new, welcoming relationships which enable them to enrich their new countries with their professional skills, their social and cultural heritage and, not infrequently, their witness of faith, which can bring new energy and life to communities of ancient Christian tradition, and invite others to encounter Christ and to come to know the Church.

Certainly every state has the right to regulate migration and to enact policies dictated by the general requirements of the common good, albeit always in safeguarding respect for the dignity of each human person. The right of persons to migrate—as the Council's Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 65, recalled—is numbered among the fundamental human rights, allowing persons to settle wherever they consider best for the realization of their abilities, aspirations and plans. In the current social and political context, however, even before the right to migrate, there is need to reaffirm the right not to emigrate, that is, to remain in one's homeland; as Blessed John Paul II stated: "It is a basic human right to live in one's own country. However this rights become effective only if the factors that urge people to emigrate are constantly kept under control" (Address to the Fourth World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees, 9 October 1998). Today in fact we can see that many migrations are the result of economic instability, the lack of essential goods, natural disasters, wars and social unrest. Instead of a pilgrimage filled with trust, faith and hope, migration then becomes an ordeal undertaken for the sake of survival, where men and women appear more as victims than as agents responsible for the decision to migrate. As a result, while some migrants attain a satisfactory social status and a dignified level of life through proper integration into their new social setting, many others are living at the margins, frequently exploited and deprived of their fundamental rights, or engaged in forms of behavior harmful to their host society. The process of integration entails rights and duties, attention and concern for the dignified existence of migrants; it also calls for attention on the part of migrants to the values offered by the society to which they now belong.

In this regard, we must not overlook the question of irregular migration, an issue all the more pressing when it takes the form of human trafficking and exploitation, particularly of women and children. These crimes must be clearly condemned and prosecuted, while an orderly migration policy which does not end up in a hermetic sealing of borders, more severe sanctions against irregular migrants and the adoption of measures meant to discourage new entries, could at least limit for many migrants the danger of falling prey to such forms of human trafficking. There is an urgent need for structured multilateral interventions for the development of the countries of departure, effective countermeasures aimed at eliminating human trafficking, comprehensive programmes regulating legal entry, and a greater openness to considering individual cases calling for humanitarian protection more than political asylum. In addition to suitable legislation, there is a need for a patient and persevering effort to form minds and consciences. In all this, it is important to strengthen and develop understanding and cooperation between ecclesial and other institutions devoted to promoting the integral development of the human person. In the Christian vision, social and humanitarian commitment draws its strength from fidelity to the Gospel, in the knowledge that "to follow Christ, the perfect man, is to become more human oneself" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 41).

Dear brothers and sisters who yourselves are migrants, may this World Day help you renew your trust and hope in the Lord who is always at our side! Take every opportunity to encounter him and to see his face in the acts of kindness you receive during your pilgrimage of migration. Rejoice, for the Lord is near, and with him you will be able to overcome obstacles and difficulties, treasuring the experiences of openness and acceptance that many people offer you. For "life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way" (*Spe Salvi*, 49).

I entrust each of you to the Blessed Virgin Mary, sign of sure hope and consolation, our "guiding star", who with her maternal presence is close to us at every moment of our life. To all I affectionately impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 12 October 2012

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

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 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.

For our leaders, that they may implement policies that allow for safe migration, just migrant working conditions, and an end to the detention of asylum seekers, while protecting our national safety.

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.