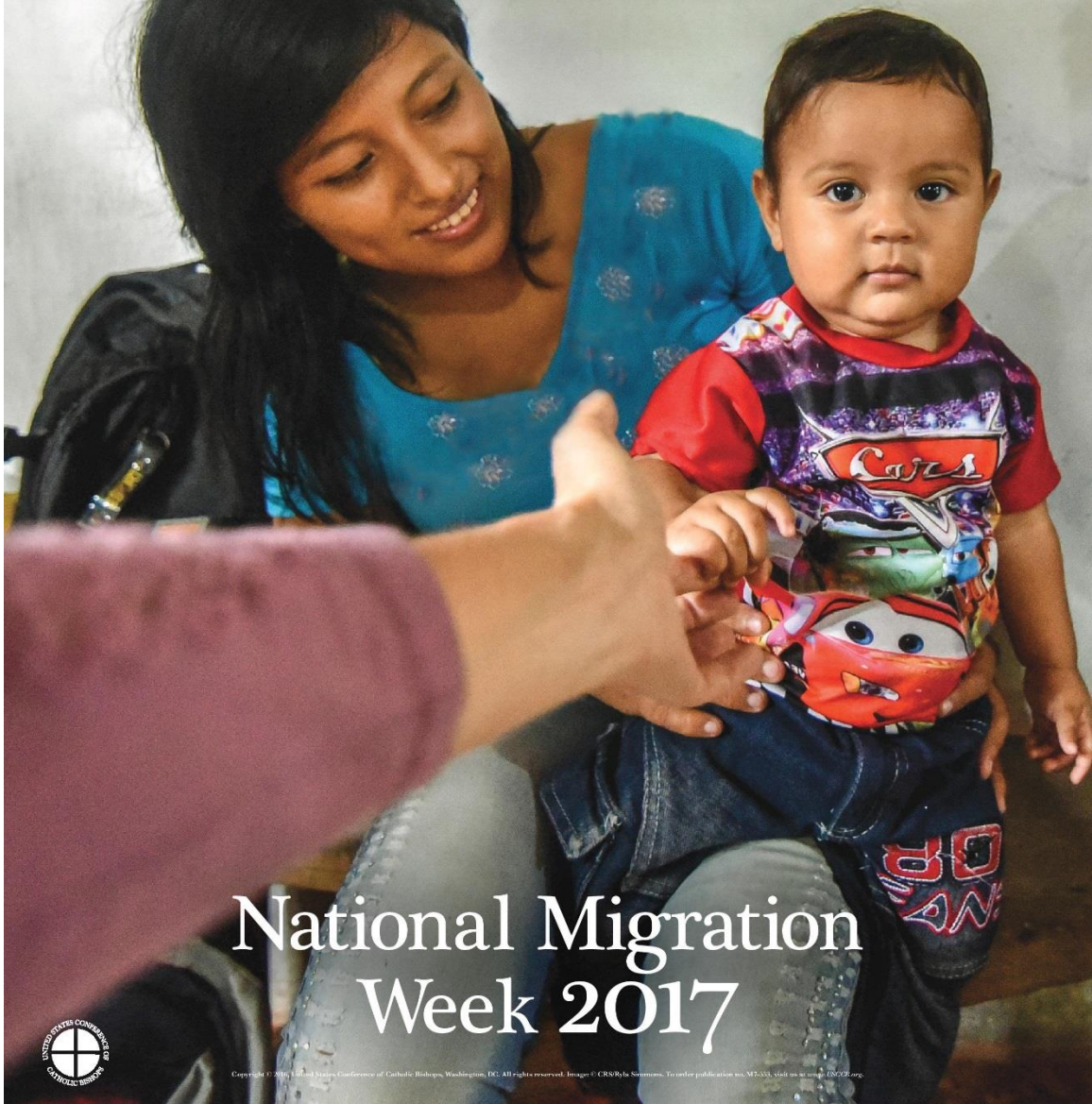


# Creating a Culture of Encounter



National Migration  
Week 2017



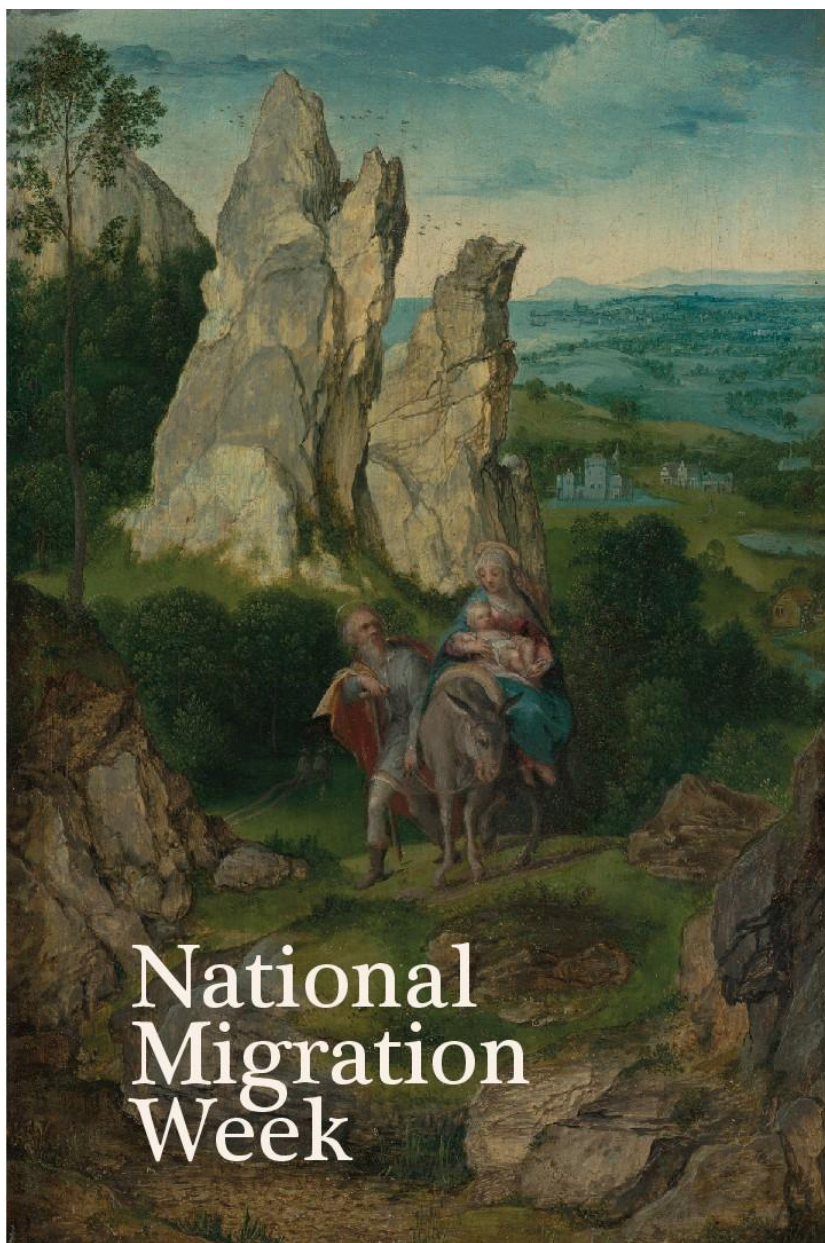
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# Migration & Refugee Services

Renewing Hope. Seeking Justice.

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



## National Migration Week

January 8 – 14, 2017



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# Creating a Culture of Encounter

## National Migration Week 2017

January 8-14, 2017

For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week, which is an opportunity for the Church to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including immigrants, refugees, children, and victims and survivors of human trafficking. The theme for National Migration Week 2017 draws attention to Pope Francis' call to create a culture of encounter, and in doing so to look beyond our own needs and wants to those of others around us. In the homily given at his first [Pentecost](#) as pope, he emphasized the importance of encounter in the Christian faith: "For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others."

With respect to migrants, too often in our contemporary culture we fail to encounter them as persons, and instead look at them as others or render them invisible. We do not take the time to engage migrants in a meaningful way, as fellow children of God, but remain aloof to their presence and suspicious of their intentions. During this National Migration Week, let us all take the opportunity to engage migrants as community members and neighbors – all of whom are worthy of our attention and support.

Please find in this toolkit suggestions on how you can celebrate National Migration Week and educate community members about the Catholic Church's position on migration.

Por cerca de medio siglo, la Iglesia Católica en los Estados Unidos ha celebrado la Semana Nacional de la Migración, lo cual le brinda a la Iglesia una oportunidad para reflexionar sobre las circunstancias que enfrentan los migrantes, incluyendo a los inmigrantes, los refugiados, los niños y a las víctimas y sobrevivientes del tráfico humano. El tema para la Semana Nacional de la Migración 2017 hace hincapié en el llamado del Papa Francisco para crear una cultura de encuentro y, al hacerlo, a mirar más allá de nuestros deseos y necesidades a las de los demás alrededor del mundo. En la homilía que dio en su primer [Pentecostés](#) como Papa, él enfatizó la importancia del encuentro en la fe cristiana: "Esta palabra para mí es muy importante: el encuentro con los demás. ¿Por qué? Porque la fe es un encuentro con Jesús, y nosotros debemos hacer lo mismo que hace Jesús: encontrar a los demás."

Con respecto a los migrantes, a menudo en nuestra cultura moderna no los vemos como personas sino que los vemos como que fueran otros o simplemente nos son invisibles. No nos tomamos el tiempo para hacerlos partícipes en una manera significativa, como iguales hijos de Dios, sino que permanecemos alejados de su presencia y sospechosos de sus intenciones. Durante esta Semana Nacional de la Migración, tomemos esta oportunidad para hacerlos partícipes como miembros de la comunidad y como vecinos—todos los cuales son dignos de nuestra atención y nuestro apoyo.

Por favor, en este kit de herramientas, encuentren sugerencias para la manera de celebrar la Semana Nacional de la Migración y para educar a los miembros de sus comunidades acerca de la posición de la Iglesia Católica sobre el tema de la migración.

## Migration Facts

### Immigration Reform

**Position:** The Catholic Bishops and the Church support humane immigration reform. We must reform our broken system that separates families and impedes due process.

**Facts:**

- Since 2010, 3.6 million immigrants have become [naturalized US citizens](#).
- Unauthorized immigrants also pay a wide range of taxes, including sales taxes where applicable and property taxes – directly if they own and indirectly if they rent. [Estimates](#) state that unauthorized migrants pay an estimated 11.64 billion dollars every year in state and local taxes.
- It can take upwards of a decade for legal permanent residents to reunify with immediate family members from Mexico, the Philippines, and other countries. ([Congressional Research Service](#))

### Refugee Protection

**Position:** USCCB is the largest private refugee resettlement agency in the United States, helping to resettle more than one million refugees in the United States since 1975.

**Facts:**

- The top five populations resettled during Fiscal Year (FY) Y2015: Congo, Syria, Burma, Iraq, and Somalia.
- 12,000 Syrian refugees resettled in the United States since the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011. ([Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration](#))
- According to the United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 66 million persons were displaced in the world at the end of 2015. ([UNHCR](#))

### Unaccompanied Children and Families from Central America

**Position:** Unaccompanied children arrive at our borders without their parent or legal guardian with them. In recent years, many of these children were from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. Most are fleeing grave violence, gang recruitment and are seeking to reunify with family in the United States.

**Facts:**

- In FY 2015, Mexico deported 165,000 Central Americans. The number detained in Mexico has tripled in the past four years amid growing pressure and economic support from the US to stem the flow. ([The Guardian](#))
- 73% of unaccompanied children who had legal representation won their immigration case in the United States, compared to 15% who were unrepresented. ([American Bar Association](#))

### Immigrant Detention

**Position:** Immigrant detention is a growing industry in this country, with Congress allocating as much as \$2 billion a year to maintain and expand it. Due to mandatory detention laws people

who are not flight risks or risks to national security and are extremely vulnerable, such as asylum-seekers, families, and victims of human trafficking, are being held unnecessarily in detention.

**Facts:**

- In FY2015 the Department of Homeland Security detained 406,595 immigrants compared to 486,651 in FY2014; it is required that 34,000 beds are available each day. ([Department of Homeland Security](#))
- Alternatives to detention programs can cost as low as \$10.55 per person per day, as compared to \$164 per person per day for detention. ([GAO](#))

**Human Trafficking**

**Position:** Human trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of subjecting that person to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. The Catholic Church objects to this practice as an affront to human dignity.

**Facts:**

- Estimates vary, but as many as 17,500 persons are trafficked into the United States annually.
- Although sex trafficking remains a serious problem, the two largest trafficking cases in the United States involved labor trafficking, in Guam and in New York (Long Island).

## **National Migration Week Talking Points**

- Catholics are called to stand with new American immigrants as our brothers and sisters. This is who we are. This is what we do.
- We belong to the same Church no matter where we're from. Our Catholic identity isn't based on where we live but on our faith in Jesus Christ. We're one family, and the Catholic Church is always our home.
- In Pope Francis we have a leader from Argentina, a country of immigrants. He is the son of immigrants and a native Spanish speaker. These issues are close to his heart.
- Immigration is about real people who are trying to find a better life and a new beginning. As Pope Francis stated, "Each migrant has a name, a face and a story."
- Welcoming immigrants is part of the Catholic Social Teaching and reflects the Biblical tradition to welcome the stranger.
- The Catholic Church has been welcoming immigrants to the United States since the nation's founding and has been integral in helping integrate into American culture.
- In addition to welcoming and caring for those in need, the Church continues to uphold the centrality of family reunification as a critical component of our immigration system.
- America is a better country due to the contributions of immigrants.
- Forced displacement of people is at the highest level since World War Two, with more than 65 million people displaced around the world.
- Refugees are the most rigorously screened population coming into America. This screening happens before they ever set foot in our country.



## Letters to the Editor Tips

Writing a letter to the editor (LTE) is the perfect way to offer a rebuttal, add another perspective, or express your appreciation for an already-published article or commentary piece.

Please let us know if your letter to the editor is published! We'll deliver it to elected officials and promote it on our social media. Completing this final step in the letter to the editor process helps ensure that your letter's impact is even greater. Email us at [migrationweek@usccb.org](mailto:migrationweek@usccb.org) with a link to your published LTE.

### Letter to the Editor Writing Tips

- **Keep it short** (150-250 words) – If you don't edit your LTE, the news outlet might edit it for you. Since they could cut out your main point, it's best to write something both punchy and brief.
- **Speak in your own voice.** Tell why the article matters to you. Talk about your faith, professional experience or knowledge of migration. Be personal and authentic.
- **Get local.** Editors are generally more interested in letters that highlight local impacts. Can you relate the issues raised in a national piece on migration and immigration to issues impacting your own community?
- **Get personal.** Migration is about people on the move. Personalize your perspective with a story about people you know affected by migration- a family member or someone you know from your church.
- **Follow these best practices:**
  - 1) **Reference a recent article (if possible).** Your letter is most likely to be published if it responds directly to the newspaper's recent coverage of a specific migration issue. Mention the article you're responding to by its headline and date.
  - 2) **Send your LTE in the body of your email,** not as an attachment.
  - 3) **Include contact information:** Include your full name, contact information, location, and profession or expertise (if relevant) in the email as well. (The paper will not print your contact information.)
- **Be timely** – Try to get your LTE in within 1-3 days after the relevant article is published.

## **National Migration Week Sample Letters to The Editor**

### **ENGLISH**

Dear Editor:

Your recent article, [name of article], discussing the issue of immigration/refugees in the recent presidential campaign [and/or post-election cycle] was alarming [or reaffirming (depends on tone of article)]. [name of State or community] has a proud history of welcoming newcomers, including immigrants, refugees, and newly naturalized citizens.

It is imperative that our local communities continue to provide a warm and welcoming presence to newcomers, so that they can feel a part of the community and contribute to its ongoing prosperity. In fact, more than 40% of America's largest companies were founded either by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Newcomers, such as immigrants and refugees are indeed a part of our future community well-being.

**OR** (in an article that has a religious theme or mentions a bishop or Church leader)

Dear Editor,

Your recent article, [name of article], discussing the issue of immigration in the recent presidential campaign [and/or post-election cycle] was alarming [or reaffirming (depends on tone of article)]. As a Catholic, I have long held immigration and support for migrant communities as a central feature of my faith. We affirm that all people – immigrants and native born alike – are made in the image and likeness of God and are worthy of respect and support. As the Church celebrates National Migration Week this week, which provides an opportunity to raise awareness on its teachings related to migration, it is encouraging to see religious leaders stand in solidarity of migrants and encourage positive reforms that will help to fix our broken immigration system.

### **SPANISH**

Estimado Editor:

En su reciente artículo [nombre del artículo], donde discute el asunto de la inmigración/los refugiados en la reciente campaña presidencial [y/o después del ciclo electoral] ha sido alarmante [o reafirmante (dependiendo del tono del artículo)]. [Nombre del Estado o de la comunidad] conserva una orgullosa historia de acoger a los recién llegados, incluyendo a los inmigrantes, los refugiados y a los nuevos ciudadanos naturalizados.

Es imperativo que nuestras comunidades locales continúen ofreciendo una presencia cálida y acogedora a los recién llegados para que ellos sientan que son parte de la comunidad y contribuyan a su continuo florecimiento. De hecho, más del 40% de las grandes compañías en los Estados Unidos fueron establecidas por inmigrantes o por hijos de inmigrantes. Los recién llegados, los inmigrantes y los refugiados, forman realmente parte de la futura prosperidad de nuestras comunidades.



**OR** (en un artículo que tenga un ángulo religioso o que mencione a un obispo, líder de la Iglesia o a la Iglesia Católica)

Estimado Editor,

Su reciente artículo, [nombre del artículo], donde discutía el asunto de la inmigración en la reciente campaña presidencial [y/o después del ciclo electoral] ha sido alarmante [o reafirmante (dependiendo del tono del artículo)]. Como católico, por mucho tiempo he mantenido a la inmigración y al apoyo por las comunidades inmigrantes como una característica central de mi fe. Nosotros afirmamos que todos los individuos—inmigrantes y nativos por igual—han sido hechos a imagen y semejanza de Dios y se merecen nuestro respeto y apoyo. Mientras que esta semana la Iglesia celebra la Semana Nacional de la Migración, lo cual brinda una oportunidad para concientizar sobre sus enseñanzas relacionadas a la migración, es muy alentador ver a los líderes religiosos en solidaridad con los migrantes y apoyando unas reformas positivas que servirán para arreglar nuestro quebrado sistema migratorio.

*“We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.” – Pope Francis*



Photo Credit: CNS photo/Irish Naval Service via EPA

## **National Migration Week Social Media Template**

### **Twitter Posts**

When tweeting, please be sure to include @uscjbfi and/or @MRSServes so we can know what you are doing and retweet your post.

.@Pontifex says to offer the warmth and love of Christ to Immigrants and you will unlock the mystery of their heart. #Refugeeswelcome #NMW

During #NMW @MRSServes recognizes the work of the Catholic Church in welcoming immigrants & refugees #refugeeswelcome

We cannot fully understand the plight of the refugee until we all embrace the power of encounter #encuentro #refugeeswelcome

La dura situación de los refugiados siempre ha estado present. Jesús fue un refugiado, en Su Nombre trabajamos para ellos #refugeeswelcome

No podremos entender bien la triste situación de los refugiados sino hasta que les acogamos y estemos con ellos#encuentro #refegueeswelcome

### **Facebook posts**

Please be sure to link any facebook post to [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

Celebrate the human dignity migrant this week as we celebrate National Migration Week (#NMW). Encourage those around you to know that #refugeeswelcome here.

There are currently more than 65 million people around the world who have been displaced from their homes due to political instability and violence. We must continue to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters. #RefugeesWelcome

As we celebrate National Migration Week #NMW we should be reminded of Hebrews 13:2 “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Celebrate these words during this week and throughout the year #refugeeswelcome

During this time of global displacement, we need to listen to our Catholic calling and welcome in the refugees who have been forced from their homes. As we look to the Bible for guidance we must remember that Jesus, our Lord and Savior was also a refugee. #Refugeeswelcome



Photo Credit: CNS photo/Peter Nicholls, Reuters

## National Migration Week Action Alert

### Creating a Culture of Encounter National Migration Week 2017

Dear Senator/Representative:

As a Catholic, I believe in the human dignity of all immigrants and refugees. With more than 65 million people displaced from their homes, we are currently witnessing the worst refugee crisis since World War Two. During National Migration Week, I celebrate the contributions of refugees and immigrants in our churches, communities and in our country. I ask that you, as an elected official:

- support humane reforms that affirms the dignity of all migrants; and
- recognize the contributions of immigrants and refugees in your community.

Sincerely,

### Creating a Culture of Encounter National Migration Week 2017

Estimado Senador/Representante:

Como católico, creo en la dignidad humana de todos los inmigrantes y refugiados. Con más de 65 millones de personas que han sido desplazadas de sus hogares, en estos momentos estamos siendo testigos de la peor crisis de refugiados desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Durante la Semana Nacional de la Migración, yo celebro las contribuciones de los refugiados y los inmigrantes en nuestras iglesias, nuestras comunidades y nuestra nación. Yo le solicito a usted, en su calidad de funcionario oficial que:

- apoye reformas que afirma la dignidad de todos los migrantes; y
- reconozca las contribuciones de los inmigrantes y refugiados en su comunidad.

Sinceramente,

## National Migration Week Petitions

### On Migrants

For all bishops in our Church, that he may be encouraged by our prayers and support to lead God's people in building a culture that respects the human dignity of all migrants, we pray to the Lord,

For all Catholics, that God inspire them to take action in their local communities to support and protect migrants and to advocate on their behalf, we pray to the Lord,

For our neighbors, coworkers, friends, fellow Christians, and all people, that they may grow in their awareness of the issue of migration and become a voice in the public square calling for greater protections for these populations, we pray to the Lord,

For migrants, refugees, and all other strangers in our midst, that they may find strength in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love, we pray to the Lord.

For the bishops, that they will continue in their commitment to refugee resettlement and provide in their communities a place of welcome, we pray to the Lord,

For all refugees who are forced to flee from their homes, that God bring peace to them and their country of origin, we pray to the Lord

For refugees in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere who are experiencing great suffering, that God might bring them to a place of peace and safety, we pray to the Lord



Photo Credit: CNS



## National Migration Week Advocacy: Community Engagement Ideas

- Celebrate a Mass or prayer service in your local parish to coincide with National Migration Week.
- Hold an information session or panel talk with a refugee or immigrant member of your community or parish.
- Present on Catholic Social Teaching and Migration to your youth and church groups.
- Write a letter to the editor as a way to promote education on migration.
- Volunteer to teach English to newcomers.
- Post on social media from our materials; post pictures of your event on social media.
- Host a potluck with newcomers in your community to try new foods and encounter and learn about new cultures.
- Fill out our postcard in support of humane migration policies and send it to your lawmakers.
- Organize a walk or a similar community event to help raise awareness on migration issues.
- Include migration-focused intentions in the prayer to the faithful.
- Volunteer at your local Catholic Charities to work at a citizenship workshop.
- [BE SURE TO LET US KNOW WHAT YOU DID TO CELEBRATION NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK!](#)  
Let us know by email at [migrationweek@usccb.org](mailto:migrationweek@usccb.org).

## Homily suggestions for National Migration Week

*“No American institution does more for immigrants than your Christian communities. Now you are facing this stream of Latin immigration which affects many of your dioceses. Not only as the Bishop of Rome, but also as a pastor from the South, I feel the need to thank and encourage you.” —Pope Francis, Prayer with the Bishops of the United States of America, September 2015*

Immigrants who come to the United States, and particularly those who are undocumented, are a particularly vulnerable population who need someone to speak on behalf of their human rights and dignity. Our moral tradition calls on all people of faith and goodwill to stand up in defense of life and human dignity; it is a fundamental calling for us as Catholics. Scripture speaks repeatedly of the migration experience, from Abraham who was sent out from his homeland in the Old Testament, to the Holy Family who fled Herod and lived their lives for a time as refugees in a foreign land. When the scriptural or liturgical texts address migration and themes related to it, whether on a special occasions or on regular Sundays, the homily can be an effective moment for prophetic instruction and encouragement.

Throughout National Migration Week, the readings highlight the temporal character of existence and the importance that we not place too much trust in worldly goods. In recalling the temporal nature and recognizing the relative character of the goods of the earth, we must also guard against identifying too closely with the artificial divisions that separate one person from

another, divisions that become visible too often with respect to things like economic class or national origin. We must always behave towards others in such a way that respects their human dignity. We are called on to follow the path that God laid out for us and heed to the example of Christ, who “endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart” (Heb 12:1-4).

Welcoming the migrant and migration more broadly has a central place in the development of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Stories in both the Old and the New Testament highlight the fact that in providing hospitality to the stranger we might also be unwittingly entertaining angels (Heb 13:2; Gen 18:1-15). Abraham unknowingly provides hospitality to the Lord in Mamre helped secure he and Sara a child. Not only did Abraham show such hospitality, but he himself was once a migrant. The Letter to the Hebrews, highlights the story of Abraham who, by faith, “obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned in the promised land as in a foreign country.” (Heb 11). It might be worth reminding those at Mass that our very faith has its roots by the decision made by one man, Abraham--a migrant--who decided to follow God’s command to travel to a foreign land.

Jesus tells us that when we throw a banquet, we should not invite our relatives or wealthy neighbors, “but the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind” (Lk 14). Does this have any bearing on policies that are put into place with respect to migration? It does not mean is that we are obligated to invite all of the world’s poor into the country and disregard the well-being of those who are already here. Rather this passage invites us to reflect on the degree to which we, in our surplus, provide to those who live in a state of deficit. Where we are able to provide support and care for the poor and the downtrodden out of our excess, we are obligated to help. It is for this reason that we must balance the demands of the common good of our country, while responding to the needs of those standing on the outside who can benefit from our wealth. This can mean that we should implement a generous immigration policy that enables people to come and work and try to earn a better living than they might have available to them in their homeland. This might also mean that we turn our attention to the developing world and try to help these countries, through such mechanisms as foreign aid and humane trade agreements, to build up their economy so that their citizenry can find work there and not have to leave their families and communities to find it elsewhere.

Too often the media messages that we hear in relation to migrants is distorted and provides a false understanding of who migrants are and why they come. The rhetoric surrounding this issue can easily bias people in ways that do not properly appreciate the benefits that migrants can bring to our communities. Teach people about what the Church’s rich body of social thought says about our Christian responsibility to “welcome the stranger among us.”

## Draft Pulpit Announcement

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants campaign is currently working on behalf of the Bishops, including our own Arch/Bishop/Cardinal \_\_\_\_\_, to promote humane migration policies towards refugees and immigrants that reflects our Catholic values.

Join the U.S. Catholic bishops in support of protecting immigrants and refugees by sending an electronic postcard to Washington, DC asking that lawmakers ensure humane treatment towards migrants and refugees. The postcards may be sent from Justice for Immigrants' homepage at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

More information about the Catholic bishops' JFI campaign may also be found on the JFI website. Again, that website is [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

*"Closeness to the poor, the refugee, the immigrant, the sick, the exploited, the elderly living alone, prisoners and all God's other poor, will teach us a different way of resting, one which is more Christian and generous." – Pope Francis*



Photo Credit: CNS photo/Pascal Rossignol, Reuters