

# ***The Encuentro Project – El Paso, TX***

## **Scripture passages and Church Documents on the topic of Migrant, Refugees, Asylum Seeking and Immigrant Peoples –**

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### **I. Scripture passages:**

- a. Genesis 12 – God missions Abraham and Sarah to migrate to a new land.
- b. Gen. 23: 1-6 – Abraham’s dignity as a foreigner.
- c. Gen. 42-46. Need to migrate to Egypt due to famine in their land.
- d. Ex. 18: 3 – Gershom identified as foreigner.
- e. Ex. 22: 20; 23: 9 – Do not oppress the foreigner, since you were also foreigners.
- f. Leviticus 19: 9-10; 23: 22 – Provide food for the foreigner.
- g. Lev. 19: 33 – Respect the foreigner residing in your land.
- h. Lev. 25: 8-17 – Jubilee year and liberation, esp. v. 10, liberation of all inhabitants.
- i. Numbers 9: 14 – The foreigner can also observe the Passover.
- j. Deuteronomy 10: 18-19 - Befriend the foreigner.
- k. Deut. 24: 17 – Do not violate the rights of the foreigner.
- l. I Kings 8: 41 & II Chronicles 6: 32-33 – Listen to and assist the foreigner when he/she arrives.
- m. I Chronicles 29: 15 – Prayer of David: We all stand before God as foreigners and guests.
- n. Isaiah 1: 10-20 – Requirement of need for Justice for the oppressed.
- o. Isaiah 58: 1-11 – Requirement of need for Justice for the oppressed.
- p. Isaiah 61: 5 – Foreigners and sojourners work in your land.
- q. Psalm 94: 5-6 – Do not mistreat the foreigner.
- r. Psalm 119: 19 – We are pilgrims in the land.
- s. Psalm 146: 9 – God protects the foreigner.
- t. Job 31: 29-32 – Open the door to wayfarer.
- u. Mt. 2: 13-23. Joseph and Mary - flight to Egypt to escape Herod.
- v. Mt. 25: 31-46. – Criteria of Judgment.

### **II. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church – Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace - 2004**

1. Numbers 79 & 80. In particular, second paragraph of #80:

*Insofar as it is part of the Church's moral teaching, the Church's social doctrine has the same dignity and authority as her moral teaching. It is authentic Magisterium, which obligates the faithful to adhere to it[115]. The doctrinal weight of the different teachings and the assent required are determined by the nature of the particular teachings, by their level of independence from contingent and variable elements, and by the frequency with which they are invoked[116].*

2. Number 543–

*It is the proper duty of the lay faithful to proclaim the Gospel with an exemplary witness of life rooted in Christ and lived in temporal realities: the family; professional commitment in the world of work, culture, science and research; the exercise of social, economic and political responsibilities. All secular human realities — both personal and social, including various environments and historical situations, as well as structures and institutions — are the context in which the lay Christian lives and works. These realities are places where God's love is received; the commitment of the lay faithful must correspond to this vision and is to be considered an expression of evangelical charity; “for the lay faithful to be present and active in the world is not only an anthropological and sociological reality, but in a specific way, a theological and ecclesiological reality as well”[1141].*

### **III. Strangers No Longer – Together on the Journey of Hope. USCCB & Conference of Bishops of Mexico. 2003**

#### **1. Paragraph 33**

33. Both of our episcopal conferences have echoed the rich tradition of church teachings with regard to migration. <sup>14</sup> Five principles emerge from such teachings, which guide the Church's view on migration issues.

##### **I. Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.**

34. All persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In this context, work that provides a just, living wage is a basic human need.

##### **II. Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.**

35. The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. <sup>15</sup> When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right.

##### **III. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.**

36. The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories but rejects such control when it is exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring additional wealth. More powerful economic nations, which have the ability to protect and feed their residents, have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows.

##### **IV. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.**

37. Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the global community. This requires, at a minimum, that migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims fully considered by a competent authority.

##### **V. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.**

38. Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Often they are subject to punitive laws and harsh treatment from enforcement officers from both receiving and transit countries. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.

#### **2. Paragraph 42**

42. We bishops have the primary responsibility to build up the spirit of hospitality and communion extended to migrants who are passing through or to immigrants who are settling in the area.

- We call upon pastors and lay leaders to ensure support for migrant and immigrant families.
  - We urge communities to offer migrant families hospitality, not hostility, along their journey.
  - We commend church communities that have established migrant shelters that provide appropriate pastoral and social services to migrants.
  - We encourage Catholics and all people of good will to work with the community to address the causes of undocumented migration and to protect the human rights of all migrants.
  - We call on the local church to help newcomers integrate in ways that are respectful, that celebrate their cultures, and that are responsive to their social needs, leading to a mutual enrichment of the local church.
  - We ask that special attention be given to migrant and immigrant children and youth as they straddle two cultures, especially to give them opportunities for leadership and service in the community and to encourage vocations among them.
- The Church on both sides of the border must dedicate resources to provide pastoral care for migrants who are detained or incarcerated. The presence of the Church within detention facilities and jails is an essential way of addressing the human rights violations that migrants may face when they are apprehended.

- *We encourage local dioceses to sponsor pertinent social services for migrants and immigrants, particularly affordable legal services.*
- *In many rural dioceses, the primary site of pastoral outreach for farm workers is the migrant camp, usually at a significant distance from the parish church. In this context we encourage local parishioners to be prepared as home missionaries and the migrants themselves to be prepared as catechists and outreach workers.*

#### **IV. Pope Francis**

1. Homily excerpt, Papal Mass, Consistory for the creation of new cardinals. Nov. 19, 2016

*Ours is an age of grave global problems and issues. We live at a time in which polarization and exclusion are burgeoning and considered the only way to resolve conflicts. We see, for example, how quickly those among us with the status of a stranger, an immigrant, or a refugee, become a threat, take on the status of an enemy. An enemy because they come from a distant country or have different customs. An enemy because of the color of their skin, their language or their social class. An enemy because they think differently or even have a different faith. An enemy because... And, without our realizing it, this way of thinking becomes part of the way we live and act. Everything and everyone then begins to savor of animosity. Little by little, our differences turn into symptoms of hostility, threats and violence. How many wounds grow deeper due to this epidemic of animosity and violence, which leaves its mark on the flesh of many of the defenseless, because their voice is weak and silenced by this pathology of indifference! How many situations of uncertainty and suffering are sown by this growing animosity between peoples, between us! Yes, between us, within our communities, our priests, our meetings. The virus of polarization and animosity permeates our way of thinking, feeling and acting. We are not immune from this and we need to take care lest such attitudes find a place in our hearts, because this would be contrary to the richness and universality of the Church, which is tangibly evident in the College of Cardinals. We come from distant lands; we have different traditions, skin color, languages and social backgrounds; we think differently and we celebrate our faith in a variety of rites. None of this makes us enemies; instead, it is one of our greatest riches.*

2. *Evangelii Gaudium – 2013 – Cf. parag. 88. (emphasis on face-to-face encounters for a hope of a transformation of minds and hearts)*

*The Christian ideal will always be a summons to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, all the defensive attitudes which today's world imposes on us. Many try to escape from others and take refuge in the comfort of their privacy or in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command. Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness.*

#### **3. Gaudete et Exusultate - 2018**

*101. The other harmful ideological error is found in those who find suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist or populist. Or they relativize it, as if there are other more important matters, or the only thing that counts is one particular ethical issue or cause that they themselves defend. Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection.<sup>[84]</sup> We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty.*

*102. We often hear it said that, with respect to relativism and the flaws of our present world, the situation of migrants, for example, is a lesser issue. Some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the "grave" bioethical questions. That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian, for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children. Can we not realize that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us, when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him (cf. Mt 25:35)? Saint Benedict did so readily, and though it might have "complicated" the life of his monks,*

he ordered that all guests who knocked at the monastery door be welcomed "like Christ",<sup>[85]</sup> with a gesture of veneration; <sup>[86]</sup> the poor and pilgrims were to be met with "the greatest care and solicitude".<sup>[87]</sup>

## **Quotes from Pope Francis on immigrants/migrants/refugees**

1. From CLINIC - [https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/pope\\_quotes.pdf](https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/pope_quotes.pdf)

### **V. *Ecclesia in America* – John Paul II -- 1999** Cf. Parag. 65

#### ***The question of immigrants***

65. In its history, America has experienced many immigrations, as waves of men and women came to its various regions in the hope of a better future. The phenomenon continues even today, especially with many people and families from Latin American countries who have moved to the northern parts of the continent, to the point where in some cases they constitute a substantial part of the population. They often bring with them a cultural and religious heritage which is rich in Christian elements. The Church is well aware of the problems created by this situation and is committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people, in order to help them settle in their new land and to foster a welcoming attitude among the local population, in the belief that a mutual openness will bring enrichment to all.

Church communities will not fail to see in this phenomenon a specific call to live an evangelical fraternity and at the same time a summons to strengthen their own religious spirit with a view to a more penetrating evangelization. With this in mind, the Synod Fathers recalled that "the Church in America must be a vigilant advocate, defending against any unjust restriction the natural right of individual persons to move freely within their own nation and from one nation to another. Attention must be called to the rights of migrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration". (236)

Migrants should be met with a hospitable and welcoming attitude which can encourage them to become part of the Church's life, always with due regard for their freedom and their specific cultural identity. Cooperation between the dioceses from which they come and those in which they settle, also through specific pastoral structures provided for in the legislation and praxis of the Church, (237) has proved extremely beneficial to this end. In this way the most adequate and complete pastoral care possible can be ensured. The Church in America must be constantly concerned to provide for the effective evangelization of those recent arrivals who do not yet know Christ. (238)

### **VI. *USCCB***

a. Position on immigration reform: *Migration and Refugee Services/Office of Migration Policy and Public Affairs. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops -- August 2013 "Comprehensive Immigration Reform"*

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/churchteachingonimmigrationreform.cfm>

b. *WELCOMING THE STRANGER AMONG US: UNITY IN DIVERSITY* – Nov. 2000 – NCCB-USCC

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/resources/welcoming-the-stranger-among-us-unity-in-diversity.cfm>

#### **Excerpts:**

A century ago, the Church responded generously to the needs of immigrants: building parishes and schools, establishing a vast array of charitable institutions, evangelizing newcomers, and being evangelized in turn by immigrant Catholics with distinctive traditions of worship and often a deep spirituality of their own. Members of the Eastern Catholic Churches arrived during the same period. They were not always understood by their fellow Catholics, although they were received and did develop as members of the Church in America. Despite the attacks of "nativists" and the criticisms made by English-speaking Catholics, national parishes were established that provided a safe haven where newcomers were able to pray and hear the word of God in their own languages, begin the education of their children in the language of the home, and so adapt to their new society with the security of community and faith. The Church embraced these immigrants, supporting them in their striving to build a better life and encouraging the efforts of many of them to help build

a labor movement that could represent them in that struggle. And then, as now—despite the predictions of critics—immigrants and their children quickly became vital participants in American society, acquiring proficiency in English by the second and third generations, rising in the educational system, and contributing in thousands of ways to the economic growth and social, political, and spiritual life of the country.....

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to welcoming the stranger is that many Americans have forgotten their immigrant past. "Nativism" assumes that there is just one image of a "real American" and that immigrants either cannot live up to it or willfully refuse to do so. Originally directed against Catholics of all sorts, today such nativism can be seen in a campaign against "multiculturalism" in all its forms, on the premise that reverence for distinctive traditions and histories undermines the unity of American society. Like the Catholic "Americanizers" of the nineteenth century, who opposed the establishment of national parishes, the critics of multiculturalism today want immigrants and other distinctive groups to shed their languages, customs, and identities as quickly as possible, to become Americans "just like the rest of us." But "the rest of us" are, in fact, a culturally plural society—Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and Muslims; believers and non-believers; Southerners and Northerners; Irish, Italian, and Mexican—proud of our heritages and proud to be Americans, all at once.

A kind of nativism appears in the Church itself when established members insist that there is just one way to worship, one set of familiar hymns, one small handful of familiar devotions, one way to organize a parish community, one language for all—and that immigrants must adapt to that way of doing things. In doing so, such nativists forget not only that their ancestors spoke different languages and worshiped in different ways not long ago, but that their devotions and familiar saints, even their patterns of church organization, sprang from encounters between differing traditions within the Church.....

Immigrants will experience the Church's welcome most personally at the level of the parish. Pastors and parish staff, accordingly, must be filled with a spirit of welcome, responding to a new and perhaps little-understood culture. They will be able to do so precisely to the extent that they have received the support of the diocese and the training that should go with it. A pastor with an open and welcoming spirit who insists that the whole parish participate in such a spirit can make a tremendous difference in relations among different groups. Pastors need to know about effective models for accommodating multiple cultural groups within a single parish structure. At the same time, the effort to mediate competing demands for facilities and lingering rivalries among groups requires sensitivity to the needs and styles of both cultures, as well as patience, charity, and communications skills....

Solidarity with migrants and refugees will take many forms, from participating in efforts to ensure that the U.S. government respect the basic human rights of all immigrants, to providing direct assistance to immigrants through diocesan and parish programs. Particularly vulnerable are the immigrant elderly who often find themselves isolated in their new country, lacking in language skills and in the family and community support system that they enjoyed in their country of origin.

Community organizing efforts can also be important vehicles for addressing the needs of immigrant communities and incorporating immigrants into civic life. Such efforts can provide the basis for achieving improved housing conditions, a living wage, better medical attention, and enhanced educational opportunities for all, and for empowering local communities. The United States Catholic Conference supports many such efforts through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. The local church's participation in such efforts is important, both for the direct good that community organizing can do for individuals and groups and as part of a broader evangelization that proclaims God's care for all his children and the Church's special responsibility for the poor, the persecuted, and the stranger.

**VII. Pastoral letter on immigration from Bishop Mark Seitz – Bishop of the Diocese of El Paso. – July 2017**

[www.bordermigrant.org](http://www.bordermigrant.org) (in English and Spanish)

**VIII. Towards the Global Compact on Migrants and Refugees 2018  
Migrants and Refugees Section, Integral Human Development – Vatican**

<https://migrants-refugees.va/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/A4-ENG-2nd-Edition-Towards-the-Global-Compacts-2018-HOME.pdf>

The Document develops *MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 51st WORLD DAY OF PEACE 1 JANUARY 2018* regarding migrants and refugee persons, which is summarized in 4 points:

- I. Welcoming: Increasing Safe and Legal Routes for Migrants and Refugees
- II. Protecting: Ensuring Migrants' and Refugees' Rights and Dignity
- III. Promoting: Fostering the Integral Human Development of Migrants and Refugees
- IV. Integrating: Greater Participation of Migrants and Refugees to Enrich Local Communities

***IX Jesuit Social Research Institute (JSRI) – Loyola Univ. New Orleans.***

Issues of poverty, racism and migration in the Gulf South.

<http://www.loyno.edu/jsri/migration>

***X. Hope Border Institute – El Paso, TX.*** – Migration issues and Catholic Social Teaching in the border región of El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and Las Cruces, New Mexico.

<https://www.hopeborder.org/>