

# World Migration Day 2003

## Introductory Messages

The Pope's message for World Migration Day 2003, underlines how enriched the Church has become with the presence of refugees, migrants and immigrants. In my ministry of pastoral care for refugees and migrants, I too have learnt "to discern in people of other cultures the handiwork of God."

The dignity and rights of every human person are of concern to the Catholic Church. While States are entitled to act in the national interest, I believe people and the common good comes before States. It follows that the right of a State to control its borders can only legitimately be exercised where human rights and dignity are protected. The international community has set minimum standards for the reception and treatment of refugees in the various international humanitarian laws. It is important that States uphold and expand on these minimum standards.

As Christians, we acknowledge God as the Lord of all Creation. God intended the goods of creation for the use of all. This beautiful land of ours does not belong to us; we are but stewards of this world and its resources. We

are called to exercise this stewardship for the good of the whole human family. The human family is one under God and we are really responsible for each other. However, we have a special moral responsibility to protect the weak, the marginalised and the vulnerable. In fact, all major religions in the world embrace the virtue of compassion and hospitality for refugees and the 'stranger'.

Jesus had a particular concern for the poor, the weak and the outcast. In his life and death he identified with them in a profound way. Jesus and his family were forced to flee, becoming refugees in Egypt. The quality of our welcome for refugees will be a measure of our fidelity to Jesus. Let us show that our Church is a place where refugees and migrants will feel welcome and are not treated as aliens and strangers. Let World Migration Day in your parish be one of prayer and reflection on our responsibilities for refugees and migrants.

**Rt Rev Patrick O'Donoghue - Bishop of Lancaster  
Chairman, Office for Refugee Policy  
Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales**



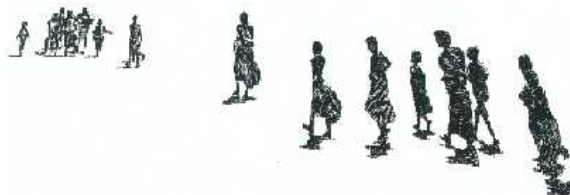
*Lao man and child, Phanat Nikhom, Thailand*  
© Jesuit Refugee Service

When the Vietnamese refugees arrived on our shores 25-30 years ago they got an extraordinarily warm welcome. The refugees from Hungary who arrived in the late 1950s also were welcomed with open arms. We have a proud history of how we reach out to those fleeing unjust regimes and torture.

Today the situation has changed dramatically. Now refugees are increasingly greeted with suspicion and even hostility. Why the change? One reason is that there is no so much talk of economic migration, trafficking, the abuse of the asylum system, rejected asylum seekers that support for those seeking asylum has been eroded. Media headlines highlight the abuses and give less attention to the plight of all those who are fleeing for their lives.

This is a time to remember that there are indeed still people who suffer human rights abuses, torture, victimisation on account of religious, ethnic or other grounds. There are still people in need of asylum, many more than we would wish to admit. We want to believe the world is a safer, more just, more humane place and we want to make it that way. But wishful thinking cannot change the reality. People still need protection, they still need asylum. That is a reality which calls us to respond with compassion just as we did in the past.

**John Dardis SJ,  
Jesuit Refugee Service Europe Regional Director**



Migration issues are an ongoing area of concern for the Church. As Christians, we are called on to affirm the dignity of the human person and to open our hearts to all our brothers and sisters. The Pope's message for this year's World Day of Refugees and Migrants sums up the universal nature of the challenge that we face, both as individuals and as a nation.

*Migration...involves all nations, either as countries of departure, of transit or of arrival. It affects millions of human beings, and presents a challenge that the pilgrim Church, at the service of the whole human family, cannot fail to take up and meet in the Gospel spirit of universal charity.*

Global migration has resulted in an unprecedented diversity of cultural traditions coming together in Britain. Our Christian community is called in solidarity to welcome the stranger in our midst and to reject all forms

of racism, xenophobia and extreme nationalism. Too often, migrants who wish to make a vital contribution to the life of our nation become victims of racial and ethnic discrimination. Many of those who have settled amongst us and brought a vast richness to our society remain vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. There is no room for complacency in our struggle for a deeper sense of human solidarity. Our faith compels us to open our hearts to those who differ from us and to strive for greater knowledge and respect of each other.

I wish to reaffirm the commitment of the Catholic Association for Racial Justice to challenge racism in all its forms and, in tackling those issues, which are of concern to all who strive for racial justice, to continue to support the human rights of all people.

**Bishop Kieran Conry, Bishop of Arundel & Brighton,  
Bishop President of CARJ**

---

## Call to overcome all racism, xenophobia and exaggerated nationalism

---

*In England and Wales World Migration Day is called A Special Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, celebrated any day in the first week of Advent.*

*The following is a summary of Pope John Paul II's message for World Migration Day in 2003.*

The phenomenon of migration affects millions of people and involves all nations. The plight of undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, the internally displaced and the victims – mostly women and children – of the terrible crime of human trafficking, is of great concern. In the recent past we have witnessed instances of forced movements of peoples for ethnic and nationalistic pretensions, which have added untold misery to the lives of targeted groups. This humanitarian tragedy continues.

Migration has also touched the Church. The cosmopolitan character of the People of God is visible today in practically every Church. Migration has transformed even small and formerly isolated communities into pluralistic and inter-cultural

realities giving expression to the psalm: *"Praise the Lord, all you nations, glorify him all you peoples"* (Ps. 116:1) This is the challenge the pilgrim Church must meet in the Gospel spirit of universal love and charity.

Unfortunately, societal practices of intolerance, social exclusion and discrimination because of ethnicity continues. The Church is not an exception to these 'sinful' practices. The Catholic Church or the community is not determined by nationality or social or ethnic origins, but essentially by faith in Jesus Christ and Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity. It is the basic right of the baptised to worship and take part in the life of the community. Pastors and faithful alike must act if newcomers feel unwelcome because they are of a different culture; it is our Christian duty to welcome whoever comes knocking out of need.

We must celebrate equity, cultural diversity and solidarity (cf. *Lumen Gentium, 1*) This is a difficult path to take, a real *Way of the Cross*, but we must not be discouraged. At times the

path needs a prophetic word that points out what is wrong and encourage what is right. The Church possesses vast educational and formative resources at all levels. I therefore appeal to parents and teachers to combat racism and xenophobia by inculcating positive attitudes based on Catholic Social Doctrine. Newcomers are also invited to honour and respect the laws, culture and traditions of people who welcomed them.

In this, the Catholic Church has a profound heritage of practical service to immigrants and displaced people in the legacy of St Frances Xavier Cabrini and Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini – the inspiration to numerous Catholic welfare agencies world-wide.

May God's abundant blessings be with those who welcome the stranger in Christ's name.

**Joannes Paulus II**

---

# Liturgy Ideas

---

## Litany of Repentance

Lord, you made the world and everything in it; you created the human race of one stock, and gave us the earth for our possession.

**All: Break down the walls that separate us and unite us in a single body.**

Lord, forgive us if we have been divisive in our thinking, in our speech, in our actions; if we have classified and imprisoned one another; if we have fenced each other out by hatred and prejudice.

**All: Break down the walls that separate us and unite us in a single body.**

Lord, you mean for us to be a single people, ruled by peace, feasting in freedom, freed from injustice, truly human men and women, responsible and responsive in the life we lead, the love we share, the relationships we create.

**All: Break down the walls that separate us and unite us in a single body.**

Lord we shall need ever new insights into the truth, awareness of your will for humanity, courage to do what is right even when it is not allowed, persistence in undermining unjust structures until they crumble into dust, grace to exercise a ministry of reconciliation.

**All: Break down the walls that separate us and unite us in a single body.**

Lord share out among us the tongues of your Spirit; empower us to be doers of your Word.

**All: Lord, direct us in ways we do not yet know and equip us for your service.**

The Iona Community



## Intercession

We pray for all humanity,  
Though divided into nations and races,  
Yet all people are your children,  
Drawing from you their life and being,  
Commanded by you to obey your laws,  
Each in accordance with the power to know and understand them.  
Cause hatred and strife to vanish,  
That abiding peace may fill the earth,  
And humanity may everywhere be blessed with the fruit of peace.  
So shall the spirit of family among people,  
Show forth their faith that You are Father of all.

**From the Jewish Liberal Prayer Book**

## Old Celtic Blessing

I saw a stranger yestreen,  
I put food in the eating place  
Drink in the drinking place  
Music in the listening place  
And in the sacred name of the Triune  
He blessed myself and my house  
My cattle and my dear ones  
And the lark said in her song:  
Often, often, often  
Goes the Christ in the Stranger's guise.

## A Declaration of Faith

We believe in God the Father who created all the world, who will unite all things in Christ and who wants all people to live together as brothers and sisters in one family.

We believe in God the Son who became man, died, and rose in triumph, to reconcile all the world to God, to break down every separating barrier of race, culture or class, and to unite all people into one body.

He is exalted as Lord over all, the only Lord over every area of our life.  
He summons both the individual and society, both the Church and the State, to seek reconciliation and unity between all and justice and freedom for all.

We believe in God the Spirit, the pledge of God's coming Reign who gives the Church power to proclaim the good news to all the world, to love and serve all people, to strive for justice and peace, to warn that God judges both The individual and the Nation, and to summon all the world to accept God's reign here and now.

**The Presbyterian Church of South Africa**

## Suggested Readings

Genesis 12: 1-9, Genesis 15: 13-15  
Matthew 2: 13-23  
John 10: 29-37

## Lev. 19:33-34:

***"When a stranger stays with you in your land, do them no wrong. They shall be to you as the native among you. Love them as yourself for you have been strangers in the land of Egypt."***

---

## How you can take action

---

### 1) BECOME INFORMED:

- Obtain publications on racial justice from CARJ. You can also subscribe to 'Church & Race' (a newsletter published by Churches Commission for Racial Justice).
- For wider coverage of racism issues read the Commission for Racial Equality's website, they have a helpful fact-sheet section as well as news: [www.cre.gov.uk](http://www.cre.gov.uk)
- For wider coverage of refugee issues read the JRS, NCRF or Catholic Bishops' Conference websites (detailed below). You can also subscribe to the JRS newsletter or to the NCRF email newsletter or briefings by the Bishops' Conference. Another useful website is that of Refugee Council: [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)

### 2) PRAY AND REPENT

- Repent of any prejudice that has hindered us standing up for justice for refugees. Observe a day of prayer and fasting as an act of penitence.
- Hold a prayer vigil for racial justice.

### 3) PRACTICAL MOVES

- Write to your MP on issues of concern relating to racial justice or to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Meet with people of other faiths and ideologies to learn about each other and discuss joint activity.
- Find out how you can get involved in local refugee projects. Details of local projects are available from NCRF.
- Make a donation to the work of the NCRF or to CARJ.

### 4) GET OTHERS INVOLVED

- Celebrate the diversity of your community with a multi-cultural meal or concert.
- Encourage your church to observe Racial Justice Sunday, which takes place on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in September. Information packs are available from CARJ.
- Encourage your church to observe World Migration Day (any day during the first week of advent)
- Write a letter in your church newsletter or bulletin on racial justice and on refugees and asylum seekers.



---

## Further Information

---

### Catholic Association for Racial Justice

9 Henry Rd  
London, N4 2LH  
tel: 020 8802 8080  
e-mail:  
[info@carj.co.uk](mailto:info@carj.co.uk)

### Jesuit Refugee Service

112 Thornbury Rd  
Osterley  
Middlesex, TW7 4NN  
tel: 020 8847 3555  
e-mail: [uk@jrs.net](mailto:uk@jrs.net)  
[www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net)

### National Catholic Refugee Forum

PO Box 664  
Bristol, BS99 3ZP  
tel: 0117 924 8059  
e-mail:  
[naomicheesman@ncrf.  
fsnet.co.uk](mailto:naomicheesman@ncrf.fsnet.co.uk)  
[www.refugee-  
forum.org.uk](http://www.refugee-forum.org.uk)

### Office for Refugee Policy

Catholic Bishops'  
Conference Secretariat  
39 Eccleston Square  
London, SW1V 1BX  
tel: 020 790 4862  
e-mail:  
[joseetj@cbcew.org.uk](mailto:joseetj@cbcew.org.uk)  
[www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)