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Share the Journey

Love your neighbor as yourself.

Mark 12: 31

Throughout the Gospel Jesus calls us to love all people made in the image and likeness of our God. When we refuse to love another person, what are we saying to God?

Throughout his papacy, Pope Francis has reminded us of this call of Jesus to love all human beings, not only those who live near us, look like us, speak like us or pray like us.

Today one out of every 113 people we share this earth with is on the move. If the population continues to increase and climate change continues on the same track as today, by 2050, just 32 years from now, it is estimated that one out of every 9 people will be on the move. Pope Francis is calling us to share a journey with all those human beings who are on the move, either as migrants, refugees or as displaced people.



Share the
Journey ✨
#sharejourney



Who is my neighbor?

Luke 10:29

Our neighbors include many of the world's most vulnerable people. People leave the land of their birth to escape war, poverty and persecution or for a better life for themselves and their family members. Just like us, they are made in the image and likeness of God, deserving of dignity and love.

On September 27, 2017, the Pope launched a two-year Share the Journey Campaign from Saint Peter's Square.

Do unto others

as you would have them do unto you.

Luke 6: 31

The Share the Journey Campaign has at its vision a unified global human family. The focus is a joint journey with people on the move in the land of their birth as

internally displaced people, or those migrating across borders and becoming refugees in host countries. It provides opportunities and spaces for migrants and communities to come together and share stories and experiences with the aim of strengthening the bonds among the children of God. It is an effort to combat the culture of indifference in the world today. It means seeing through the eyes of others rather than turning a blind eye. "Not just to see but to look. Not just to hear but to listen. Not just to meet and pass by, but to stop. And don't just say 'what a shame, poor people,' but allow ourselves to be moved by pity." – Pope Francis.

The Share the Journey Campaign is a call to prayer, to reflection and to action. You can Google "Share the Journey Campaign" to find out how the Bishops in your respective countries are promoting the Gospel call to love our neighbor.

Sr Maryann Agnes Mueller, NA



Global Compact for Migration



The United Nations is currently developing a Global Compact for Migration, the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement to cover all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. In preparation, the Vatican released an Action Plan to governments with the focus of ensuring the human rights and dignity for all migrants, refugees and internally displaced peoples. Their “ultimate goal is the building of an inclusive and sustainable common home for all.”

The first draft of the Global Compact for Migration devotes an entire section to human trafficking among migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. The 2016 Trafficking in Persons report states that human trafficking is always an exploitation of vulnerability. People on the move are among the most vulnerable populations in our world today. Migrants and refugees experience vulnerability every step along the way, from the time they are forced to leave their homes until and including the time they are in a host country.

Whether people are forced to leave their homes because of climate reasons, civil war, or economic reasons it is difficult to capture the number of migrants and refugees caught in human trafficking. The International Organization for Migration interviewed refugees in Italy who had traveled along the Central Mediterranean Route connecting North Africa to Europe. They found that 76 percent of respondents answered positively to at least one indicator for human trafficking. Eighty-two percent of the 4,000 plus women who migrated from Nigeria in 2016 became victims of human trafficking.

In releasing the Vatican Action Plan, Pope Francis stated that personal safety and human dignity should be prioritized over national security. Let us pray that the international community will be successful in developing a global compact for safe, orderly migration and which will provide what these most vulnerable people of our world need to live with dignity.

Sr Maryann Agnes Mueller, NA

Esther's Story

In August of 1992, Esther and her five children ranging in age from three to fourteen years old arrived in Buffalo, NY, from Cape Coast Ghana. They came to join Esther's then husband and the children's father who had been in Buffalo since January studying at the University of Buffalo where he had been sent by the government of Ghana to continue his education.

Financially it was a difficult period for the family, with the government stipend arriving sporadically and their visa restrictions allowing only very limited employment on the university campus. The rent was often overdue and groceries were sparse. Esther tells the story of the time there was not one single item in the refrigerator, not even a drop of milk. As Esther was leaving the apartment she said to God, "I believe you will fill this refrigerator for my children." That evening when Esther returned, there was a basket filled with food sitting in front of their apartment door. In it was a note saying, "There was a special at the grocery store 'buy one, get one.' I am sharing with you the 'get one.'"

In order to supplement their limited income, Esther enrolled in a community college so that she too could work on campus since her visa status was changed to that of a student. Now the whole family was in school.

The children tell the story of how unaware they were of their circumstances. There were always people at their parish and the university campus Newman Center, the prayer group and the Fr. Joe Bissonnette Peace House run by Sr. Karen Klimczak, SSJ, who embraced the family, providing





normal American holiday celebrations and experiences of the grandeur of Niagara Falls and the excitement of area theme parks for the children.

After completing her studies and unable to find a job, Esther overstayed her visa extensions. Frustrated and emotionally spent, she took her passport and

reported to the immigration judge. Esther trusted that God would direct the legal experience and that the judge would understand her circumstances. Though that wasn't exactly what happened, she did go before a kindly judge who offered to have her leave the country as a "Voluntary Departure" rather than a "Deportation" which would mean she would never be allowed in the United States again.

Although armed with glowing letters of support from school principals, the pastor, college professors, community personnel, and a good immigration lawyer appearing before the judge, Esther was given a departure date. The next few weeks were filled with a flurry of activity putting into place supports for her children, drawing upon friends and those who had become family, to make sure her children would be secure while she was gone. Esther left the United States in 2003 believing she would be back in just a few months.

For the next eleven years, with much prayer, fasting and miracles and the tireless work of Esther's children and an immigration attorney in the U.S. and Esther working through associates at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Ghana, the day came when Esther was able to come home. Esther was reunited with her children in the United States in July 2014.

*"There has been a tragic rise
in the number of migrants
seeking to flee from
the growing poverty caused by
environmental degradation.
They are not recognized
by international conventions
as refugees;
they bear the loss of the lives
they have left behind,
without enjoying
any legal protection whatsoever."*

*Pope Francis
Laudato Si #25*

Sr Jeremy Marie Midura, NA

Climate Refugees – Migrations On the Rise



People migrate to new lands for a variety of reasons, generally, due to war, famine or economic or social conditions sometimes on a large scale as a result of desperation forcing them to look for safer places to resettle. As our earth warms, extreme weather events such as droughts, hurricanes, and floods are increasingly forcing people from their homes. In 2007, twenty million environmental refugees fled their homes, outnumbering those who fled because of war¹. Rising sea levels are beginning to flood low lying areas and island nations and this is expected to increase the number of environmental refugees to a projected fifty to two hundred million people by 2050².

In his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis states; “There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees... Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering... taking place throughout our world.”³

*“Migrants and refugees
are not pawns
on the chessboard of humanity.
They are children, women, and men
who leave or are forced
to leave their homes
for various reasons,
who share a legitimate desire
for knowing and having,
but above all for being more.”*

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2014 World Day
of Migrants and Refugees*

Island nations such as the Maldives, Bangladesh, Solomon Islands and others are all extremely vulnerable to sea level rise and their people will have little choice but to vacate their homelands. In the United States, the Biloxi-Chitmacha-Choctaw Indians of Isle de Jean Charles in Louisiana must move from their ancestral home that is quickly disappearing under water in order to save their community and culture⁴. All coastlands are vulnerable including major cities located close to the water.

There is no time to argue climate change. What is necessary is an awakening of our moral obligation to accept and care for those who are fleeing their homes because of environmental disaster. Flora and fauna will also be lost in record numbers in these devastated areas.

Can we turn a blind eye? Pope Francis states; “Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.”⁵

SM Jean Sliwinski, NA



RESOURCES

1. Seidl, Amy (2011). Finding higher ground: adaptation in the age of warming. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, page 56-57.
2. Ibid.
3. Pope Francis (2015). On care for our common home: Laudato Si. Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, paragraph 25.
4. Hasemyer, David (2016, March). Native American tribe gets federal funds to flee rising seas. Inside Climate News. Retrieved from: <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/15032016/native-americans-federal-funds-isle-de-jean-charles-relocation-climate-change-sea-level-rise>
5. Pope Francis (2015). On care for our common home: Laudato Si. Vatican City, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, paragraph 25.



Prayer Intentions



*To pray for victims of domestic violence
and iniquitous law*

God, our Lord,
save those who suffer
from various forms of domestic violence
and the wicked laws.

Help those who suffer insecurity at home;
those who experience depression,
fear, uncertainty, dread, anger, and rage.

Grant that the Holy Spirit
lead to conversion those
who are guilty of domestic violence.
Heal all those who suffer from physical
and psychological abuse,
so that they confidently open up
to the love of God.

We ask this through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



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Abbreviations

- Rome, Italy – RO
- Kraków, Poland – KR
- North America – NA
- Przemyśl, Poland – PR
- Warszawa, Poland – WA
- Curitiba PR, Brazil – BR
- Embu, Kenya – KE