

OUT OF THE DARKNESS

NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK 2014

“God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5)

God is light and we Christians are called to reflect that light in the world. This entails our inviting others into communion with the Church, speaking out against injustice, and striving to exemplify in our life Christ's example. Turning to the Gospel message we are warned against hoarding the goods of the earth for our own pleasure, and told to sell all we have and giving alms (Lk:12:33), feed the poor, visit the imprisoned, give drink to the thirsty, and welcome the stranger (Mt 25). The stranger can come in different forms, but one way in particular that she comes into our midst is in the form of the migrant.

Far away from home and dwelling in a new land, often poor with few possessions of their own, migrants can be an especially vulnerable group of people and open to exploitation and abuse. For this reason we should pay special attention to their needs, both religious and material, and advocate on their behalf with the hope of ensuring their protection and well-being.

Particularly in need of our support are the most vulnerable of migrants: children, the undocumented, refugees, and victims of slavery:

- Migrant Children, often alone and afraid and without the protection of a parent or guardian are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Special protections should be given to them to ensure their safety and well-being.
- Undocumented immigrants are often referred to as “living in the shadows.” Their marginal status has led advocates for reform to call for a legalization process that will bring them out of the shadows and provide them with the opportunity to contribute to society and live out their lives in dignity.
- All too many Refugees who are left mired in refugee camps around the world never have the opportunity to realize the full potential of their God-given skills and talents. Long term solutions need to be implemented so that refugees are not forced to remain in camps but can reintegrate into society and become contributing members of it.
- Enslaved and treated like objects for profit rather than as human beings, victims of human trafficking require liberation from their bondage and support to help them start anew. Those who enslaved them need to be brought to justice and punished accordingly so that they will not have the opportunity to hurt anyone else in the future.

What can you do to help?

- To help a migrant child in need of help, please consider becoming a foster parent. To learn more, please call 202-541-3347.
- To assist the bishops efforts in support of immigrants, learn more about the bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign at www.JusticeforImmigrants.org
- To assist the bishops' efforts on behalf of refugees, please contact your local Catholic Charities to see how you can help their resettlement program or to urge them to start a program if they do not have one.
- To learn how the bishops are engaging in the fight against slavery, please visit the following webpage: <http://www.usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/>
- To help support the bishops work with and on behalf of migrants, consider making a donation at: <http://www.usccb.org/mrs-ncf>