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WE
are **ONE**
FAMILY
under
GOD

USCCB National
Migration Week
January 4-10, 2015

TEACHING and LITURGY PLANNING guide for
IMMIGRATION SUNDAY MN
FEAST OF OUR LORD'S EPIPHANY
JANUARY 4, 2015



MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



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We are
ONE FAMILY
under God

NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK 2015

LOVING FATHER,

remembering that the Holy Family fled violence
and lived for a time as refugees,
we ask that you protect all refugee families fleeing
persecution,
and provide them a place of safety and comfort.

For children who are making perilous journeys,
often alone and without the protection of loved ones,
we ask that you reunite them with their families
and protect them from violence on the journey.

For all migrants,
that they not feel compelled to migrate
but have opportunities in their homeland
where they can thrive and live fully human lives.

Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality
for those who come in search of refuge.
through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

PADRE AMOROSO,

al recordar que la Sagrada Familia huyó de la violencia
y que vivió durante un tiempo en el exilio,
te pedimos que protejas a todas las familias que huyendo
de la persecución buscan refugio,
y les proporciones un lugar seguro y acogedor.

Por los niños que viajan en medio de tantos peligros,
a menudo solos y sin la protección de sus seres queridos,
te pedimos que los reúnas con sus familias
y los protejas de la violencia en el camino.

Por todos los emigrantes,
para que no se sientan obligados a emigrar,
sino que encuentren oportunidades en su tierra natal
donde puedan prosperar y vivir una vida plenamente
humana.

Abre nuestro corazón para que podamos ofrecer
hospitalidad
a aquellos que vienen en busca de refugio.
Por nuestro Señor Jesucristo, tu Hijo,
que vive y reina contigo en la unidad del Espíritu Santo
y es Dios por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.



BACKGROUND

Since 2009, the Catholic bishops of Minnesota have designated the Feast of Our Lord's Epiphany "Immigration Sunday MN" (this year, January 4, 2015). This commemoration coincides with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *National Migration Week 2015*, which takes place January 4–10, 2015 with the theme, "We are One Family under God." The theme brings to mind the importance of family in our daily lives. This reminder is particularly important when dealing with the migration phenomenon, as family members are too often separated from one another.

In his Apostolic Constitution, *Exsul Familia*, Pope Pius XII referred to the Holy Family, "fleeing into Egypt, [as] the archetype of every refugee family." Fleeing the fury of an evil king, the Holy Family is an embodiment of the millions of families fleeing violence and death around the world. Imagine Joseph, struggling in Egypt to support his family as they await a time when they can return home. Or, think of the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as they fled the dangers in their homeland. These are problems that many migrants confront on a daily basis as they try to make their way in a new land, or simply struggle to get there in the first place.

A dearth of economic opportunity confronting large segments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere places significant strain on families and often presents them with a troubling choice. Some choose to stay together and remain in their home country, even amidst difficult conditions in which economic stresses wear on familial attachments and communal stability. Others choose to leave their family and head northward, with the hope of making it to the United States to find meaningful employment to financially support their family from afar. The lure of a better life in the United States and in other developed countries promises opportunities, but it also carries its own dangers.

The threat of violence in countries of origin threatens family cohesion. Where countries are uprooted by war and persecution, families are often torn apart. One need not look to the past to find examples of refugee crises. In Syria and in the Central African Republic, forced migration is occurring on an epic scale. And in Latin America, the outbreak of gang violence has resulted in the forced migration of thousands of unaccompanied migrant children who are fleeing from their crime-ridden communities for safety.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING ON IMMIGRATION

The bishops' position on immigration and migrating persons is firmly rooted in the Social Doctrine of the Church, comprised of: the teachings of the Gospel; the Catechism; and papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS

Both the Old and New Testaments tell compelling stories of refugees forced to flee because of oppression. Exodus tells the story of the Chosen People, Israel, who were victims of slavery in Egypt. They were utterly helpless by themselves, but with God's powerful intervention, they were able to



escape and take refuge in the desert. For forty years, they lived as wanderers. Finally, God fulfilled his ancient promise and settled them on the land they could finally call home. The Israelites' experience was so painful and frightening that God ordered his people for all time to have special care for the stranger: "When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Lev 19:33-34)

One need not look further than the life and words of Jesus to understand that people on the move—migrants, immigrants, and refugees—are special in the eyes of God. The New Testament begins with Matthew's story of Joseph and Mary fleeing into Egypt with their newborn son, Jesus. Our Savior Himself lived as a refugee because His own land was not safe. In His public ministry, Jesus Himself was an itinerant man, moving from place to place, "with nowhere to lay His Head." (Mt 8:20)

Jesus reiterates the Old Testament command to love and care for the stranger, a criterion by which we will be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me." (Mt 25:35) The Apostle Paul asserts the absolute equality of all people before God: "There is neither Jew nor Greek. . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28) In Christ, the human race is one before God, equal in dignity and rights.

When we welcome our immigrant sisters and brothers, we welcome Christ Himself; for in the face of our neighbors, we see the face of Christ. This is made clear in the Gospel of Luke when the disciples, on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-15), become witnesses to the Truth by welcoming the stranger—Christ.

PAPAL TEACHINGS

In the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII established that people have a right to work in order to survive and to support their families. Pope Pius XII, in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia*, reaffirmed that migrants have a right to a life with dignity, and therefore a right to migrate toward that end: "Then, according to the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*, the right of the family to a life worthy of human dignity is recognized. When this happens, migration attains its natural scope...."

In the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII articulated both the right to migrate and the right not to migrate: "Every human being has the right to the freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of their country; and, when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate and take up residence elsewhere."

In the 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI examined at the relationship between mass migration and authentic human development. Pope Benedict highlighted the "significant contribution" that migrants give to their host countries through their labor, and warns against treating migrant people as commodities. All human beings are endowed with basic human rights. Pope Benedict noted the important relationship among poverty, unemployment, and the dignity of



work. Any authentic form of development should focus on creating conditions that enable people to both find work in their community and provide educational opportunities for their children.

Pope Francis continued Pope Benedict XVI's themes in a 2013 homily on the Italian island of Lampedusa, reminding us that we have become "a society that has forgotten the experience of weeping, of 'suffering with'" displaced persons seeking a better life for their families. He called on us to ask the Lord to "wipe out [whatever attitude] of Herod remains in our hearts" and to ask for the grace to "weep over our indifference, to weep over the cruelty in the world, in ourselves, and even in those who anonymously make socio-economic decisions that open [the] way to tragedies" that erect barriers to authentic human development for our migrant brothers and sisters.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS

FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES (January 18, 2015)

A Church without Frontiers, Mother to All

Dear brothers and sisters,

Jesus is 'the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person.' His solicitude, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized, invites all of us to care for the frailest and to recognize his suffering countenance, especially in the victims of new forms of poverty and slavery. The Lord says: 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' The mission of the Church, herself a pilgrim in the world and the Mother of all, is thus to love Jesus Christ, to adore and love him, particularly in the poorest and most abandoned; among these are certainly migrants and refugees, who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind. For this reason, the theme for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: Church without frontiers, Mother to all.

"The Church opens her arms to welcome all people, without distinction or limits, in order to proclaim that 'God is love.' After his death and resurrection, Jesus entrusted to the disciples the mission of being his witnesses and proclaiming the Gospel of joy and mercy. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples left the Upper Room with courage and enthusiasm; the strength of the Holy Spirit overcame their doubts and uncertainties and enabled all to understand the disciples' preaching in their own language. From the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world, and has been without borders. This mission has continued for two thousand years. But even in the first centuries, the missionary proclamation spoke of the universal motherhood of the Church, which was then developed in the writings of the Fathers and taken up by the Second



Vatican Council. The Council Fathers spoke of Ecclesia Mater to explain the Church's nature. She begets sons and daughters and 'takes them in and embraces them with her love and in her heart.'

"The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place, or disposable. When living out this motherhood effectively, the Christian community nourishes, guides, and indicates the way, accompanying all with patience, and drawing close to them through prayer and works of mercy.

"Today this takes on a particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions. Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.

"On the other hand, we sense in our conscience the call to touch human misery, and to put into practice the commandment of love that Jesus left us when he identified himself with the stranger, with the one who suffers, with all the innocent victims of violence and exploitation. Because of the weakness of our nature, however, 'we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length.'

"The courage born of faith, hope, and love enables us to reduce the distances that separate us from human misery. Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognized in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches. Pope Paul VI spoke of this when he said that 'the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others.'

"The multicultural character of society today, for that matter, encourages the Church to take on new commitments of solidarity, communion, and evangelization. Migration movements, in fact, call us to deepen and strengthen the values needed to guarantee peaceful coexistence between persons and cultures. Achieving mere tolerance that respects diversity and ways of sharing between different backgrounds and cultures is not sufficient. This is precisely where the Church contributes to overcoming frontiers and encouraging the 'moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization ... towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just, and fraternal world.'

"Migration movements, however, are on such a scale that only a systematic and active cooperation between States and international organizations can be capable of regulating and managing such movements effectively. For migration affects everyone, not only because of the extent of the phenomenon, but also because of 'the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community.'



“At the international level, frequent debates take place regarding the appropriateness, methods, and required norms to deal with the phenomenon of migration. There are agencies and organizations on the international, national, and local level which work strenuously to serve those seeking a better life through migration. Notwithstanding their generous and laudable efforts, a more decisive and constructive action is required, one which relies on a universal network of cooperation, based on safeguarding the dignity and centrality of every human person. This will lead to greater effectiveness in the fight against the shameful and criminal trafficking of human beings, the violation of fundamental rights, and all forms of violence, oppression, and enslavement. Working together, however, requires reciprocity, joint action, openness, and trust, in the knowledge that 'no country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration.'”

“It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.

“Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress.

“Dear migrants and refugees! You have a special place in the heart of the Church, and you help her to enlarge her heart and to manifest her motherhood towards the entire human family. Do not lose your faith and hope! Let us think of the Holy Family during the flight in Egypt: Just as the maternal heart of the Blessed Virgin and the kind heart of Saint Joseph kept alive the confidence that God would never abandon them, so in you may the same hope in the Lord never be wanting. I entrust you to their protection and I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.”

From the Vatican, 23 September 2014

FRANCESCO



IMMIGRATION STATEMENT FROM THE MINNESOTA CATHOLIC BISHOPS

“Unlocking the Gate in Our Hearts”

A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota on the Need for Federal Immigration Reform

March 2012

We, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Minnesota, are deeply concerned about the nation’s immigration policy. It is inconsistent, ineffective, and does not promote the common good.

The lack of an effective, coherent national policy has led to the introduction of many bills in state legislatures around the country, including in Minnesota, that seek to address the complex issue of immigration.

Such bills are a response to the failure of the current federal immigration laws and regulations to halt illegal immigration and the resulting economic, social, and fiscal impact this has had on many state and local governments.

Enforcement-focused state legislation, however, often divides immigrant families and criminalizes the efforts of those who work with immigrants. State legislation cannot repair a failed national policy.

Thus, we seek to reiterate our support for comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level, as well as propose the relevant principles that should guide those reforms.

We recognize that finding solutions to the plight of immigrants today will sometimes necessitate the overcoming of boundaries in the heart, not just on the land. People erect walls for protection when they feel threatened.

At some point, however, we must reach out to human persons in need, and the demands of our common human nature compel us to open a gate in the wall, so that what human dignity demands is not denied to a sister or brother. But before a gate finds its way into the walls outside, there must be a gate that opens in the heart.

This is what the Good Samaritan did: without denying the differences that kept Jews and Samaritans apart, he gave the assistance that was demanded of him by the universal law of love—the law of our common humanity—by supplying the basic human needs of a poor stranger.

Like the Samaritan, we must see all people, including immigrants and undocumented workers who may be different from us, as children made in the image and likeness of God, and fashion our response to their needs accordingly.



Pursuing Life, Liberty, and Happiness While Recognizing Obligations

The Church's perspective on immigration is rooted in her teaching that every human person is created in God's image and has God-given dignity, rights, and duties.

America's founders properly understood that human rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are universal and inalienable. Governments merely recognize and respect these rights; they do not create them.

The human right to life—the foundation of every other right—implies the right to emigrate. A dignified existence that preserves life requires food, shelter, clothing, and economic opportunity. Political instability, economic distress, religious persecution, or other conditions that offend basic human dignity may require one to seek these basic necessities in another country.

The right to emigrate, however, is not absolute. Immigrants are obliged to respect and abide by the laws and traditions of the countries in which they come to reside, and must work toward building solidarity with citizens of their new country of residence.

Catholic teaching also recognizes the sovereignty of nations to secure their borders and make decisions about the identity and number of immigrants they allow into their countries. Our government has the duty to consider immigration's impact on the domestic economy and our national security. Yet, we must always make sure that we are not exaggerating these concerns in ways that deny the basic humanitarian needs of good people seeking refuge in our country.

It is often true that undocumented workers may break immigration laws to come to the United States. We wish to emphasize that a concern for upholding the law supports the common good. But it is also true that laws that undermine human dignity, separate families, and which prevent the exercise of basic human rights are unjust laws in need of reform. Good laws should not and need not exclude the possibility of mercy.

The United States is a nation of immigrants and our unique historical experience shows the important contributions—social, cultural, and economic—that immigrants have made and continue to make to American society. Although immigrants have not always been received with hospitality, Minnesotans, like all Americans, have a responsibility to comfort and welcome the stranger in their midst.

Principled Immigration Policy

We believe, with our brother bishops around the country, that policy proposals in this complex area should be assessed by five key principles:



- Persons have the right to seek economic opportunities in their homeland; conditions ought to be such that persons can work and support their families in dignity and safety;
- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families when they are unable to find work and therefore are unable to support their families at home;
- Sovereign nations have a right to protect and control their borders for the common good;
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection; and
- The human rights and human dignity of all persons, including undocumented immigrants, should be respected.

In addition, any just immigration policy should also:

- Uphold the human dignity of all persons and work against any injustice that compromises the dignity of immigrants;
- Promote and give priority to the reunification of families; and
- Recognize the rich contribution to the community by those immigrants and migrants who work and live here.

These Catholic moral principles are consistent with America's founding ideals and aspirations to be one nation under God, a people made up of many races and creeds.

Based on these principles the American bishops support comprehensive immigration policy reform that secures our national borders and provides undocumented immigrants the opportunity to earn permanent residency and eventual citizenship.

Such reform should include:

- an earned legalization program for foreign nationals of good moral character;
- policies designed to keep families together;
- a revamped temporary worker program that protects both the workers who come to the United States and U.S.-citizen workers;
- the restoration of immigrants' due process rights; and
- an effort to meaningfully address the root cause of migration, such as underdevelopment and poverty in countries of immigrant origin.

Moreover, such reform would include the targeted, proportionate, and humane enforcement of immigration laws.

Taking Action

Legislation at the state level cannot achieve necessary reform of national policy. Such legislation also could result in conflicting laws among the states that could lead to the abuse of human rights,



disruptions of families in ways that adversely affect children, and send a message of hostility when Jesus calls us to welcome the stranger, and to love others as He has loved us.

The more fruitful approach would be for public officials in our state, and all of us as citizens, to petition Congress and the President to courageously enact comprehensive immigration reform.

We encourage members of the Minnesota Legislature to reject any measures that are in opposition to the fundamental human dignity of immigrants—especially the undocumented; and we encourage the Minnesota congressional delegation in Washington, D.C. to work for just and compassionate reform of the nation’s immigration system.

Finally, we ask that people join us in prayer to God for a just, yet merciful solution to the plight of immigrants in our country.

Sincerely,

The Most Rev. John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
The Most Rev. John F. Kinney
Bishop of St. Cloud
The Most Rev. John M. LeVoir
Bishop of New Ulm
The Most Rev. John M. Quinn
Bishop of Winona
The Most Rev. Paul D. Sirba
Bishop of Duluth

The Most Rev. Michael J. Hoeppner
Bishop of Crookston
The Most Rev. Lee A. Piché
Auxiliary Bishop of St. Paul and Minneapolis
The Most Rev. Harry J. Flynn
Archbishop Emeritus of St. Paul and Minneapolis
The Most Rev. Victor H. Balke
Bishop Emeritus of Crookston
The Most Rev. Bernard J. Harrington
Bishop Emeritus of Winona

ADDITIONAL IMMIGRATION STATEMENTS FROM THE U.S. BISHOPS

During the past several years, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and the Bishops of Minnesota have come out with a number of statements together and individually that address the issue of immigration in the state.

For archived immigration statements, a copy of a **2014 editorial on federal immigration reform from your local bishop**, and a testimonial from a Minnesota Catholic family at risk of separation because of current U.S. immigration policy, visit the **MCC Immigration Sunday MN** page (www.mncc.org/advocacy-areas/migration/immigration-sunday-mn/).



For the most recent statements and resources from the USCCB on immigration, including those concerning the status of unaccompanied migrant children at the U.S. border and family detention center reform, visit the USCCB's *Justice for Immigrants* website (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org>).

LITURGY GUIDE

“Jesus speaks in silence in the Mystery of the Eucharist and every time reminds us that to follow Him means to come out of ourselves and make of our own lives, not a possession, but a gift to Him and to others.”

– Pope Francis, May 31, 2013

READINGS

First Reading: Isaiah 60: 1-6

Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; But upon you the LORD shines, and over you appears his glory. Nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: Your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses. Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you. Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; All from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD.

Responsorial: Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Second Reading: Ephesians 3: 2-3a, 5-6

If, as I suppose, you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for your benefit, which was not made known to human beings in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles are co-heirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it has been written through the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; since from you shall come a ruler, who is to shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search diligently for the child. When you



have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage." After their audience with the king they set out. And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them, until it came and stopped over the place where the child was. They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their country by another way.

GENERAL INTERCESSION EXAMPLES

For immigrants, migrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that our parish and parishioners be the loving "face of Christ" for them in their time of fear, uncertainty, and need.

For our immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking sisters and brothers, may they help to build harmonious and healthy communities wherever they may live.

For Pope Francis, Arch(bishop)_____, priests, deacons, women religious, and missionaries, that they may have the strength and fortitude to lead and guide us as agents of God's mercy, justice, and love for immigrants and all vulnerable people.

For our political leaders and public servants, that they may implement and support policies that promote family unity and reunification, and that uphold the basic rights and human dignity of every person.

For our community gathered here today, that as we build and deepen our relationship with Christ we may come to a greater understanding of our vocation to love, and that this understanding helps transform our relationships as sources of the light of Christ in the world.

For unaccompanied migrant children, and for the migrant women and their children who are seeking asylum and being held in detention centers at the U.S. borders, that they may be protected from harm and abuse, and that they are ultimately reunited with loving family.

For migrant workers, that they may work in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labor may be truly grateful for and respect what they provide to our communities and broader economies.

For the victims and buyers of forced labor and all forms of human trafficking, that they recognize the God-given dignity of every human being and help break the cycle of slavery for themselves and others.

For an end to the violence, poverty, and despair that displace so many of our sisters and brothers from their homes and homelands, especially in the Central American countries that are currently plagued with gang violence.



For all of our ancestors who have gone before us in search of safety and work, and for the repose of their souls.

MUSIC IDEAS

Following are some music examples that could be fitting for your Statewide Immigration Sunday celebration.

Mass setting and general resources:

- **Missa ad Gentes:** Maryknoll Centennial Mass, Michael Joncas, GIA Publications
Various movements of this mass setting musically represent both the Maryknoll community's United States heritage and the diverse cultures in which Maryknoll missionaries serve—cultures that represent some of our most vibrant immigrant communities in this country. Cultural influences represented in the settings include Portuguese, Hispanic, Russian, and Asian. The text also incorporates Latin, which allows us to celebrate our common heritage and unity as Catholics.
- **Library of Gregorian chant propers:** For those parish communities that have a resurging interest in older sacred music traditions, visit the “Christmastide” section under “Epiphany-Jan. 6” at the Institute of Christ the King Sovereign Priest website (www.institute-christ-king.org/latin-mass-resources/sacred-music/).

Other suggestions:

Gathering Song

- O Sanctissima/O Most Virtuous
- Sing a New Church, Nettleton, OCP Publications
- Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo/We Are the Body of Christ, Jaime Cortez, OCP Publications

Responsorial Psalm

- Every Nation on Earth (Ps. 72), Michael Joncas, GIA Publications
- Lord, Every Nation, Jesse Manibusan, OCP Publications

Alleluia

- Celtic Alleluia, Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker: Alternative verse for the Feast of the Epiphany: A holy day has dawned.
Adore the Lord, you nations,
for today a light
has come on the earth.

Preparation of the Gifts

- Bread of Life (Advent/Christmas setting) Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- Let Us Be Bread, Thomas J. Porter, GIA Publications, Inc.
- Ubi Caritas/Where Love Is



Eucharistic Song

- Here I Am, Lord, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- Lead Us to Your Table, Tom Tomaszek and Steve Angrisano, OCP Publications
- Adoro te Devote (I Devoutly Adore You)
- Panis Angelicum (Bread of Angels)

Recessional

- Christ, Be Our Light, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- City of God, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
- Lead Me Lord, John Becker, OCP Publications
- We Are Called to Serve, Julie and Tim Smith, Resource Publications



READING REFLECTIONS

For background on federal and state immigration reform and policy, as well as the statistics on current migrant populations in the United States, particularly in Minnesota, to incorporate into your homily, visit the MCC Immigration Sunday MN page (<http://www.mncc.org/advocacy-areas/migration/immigration-sunday-mn/>).

First Reading: *Isaiah 60:1-6*

This text from Isaiah speaks of the new Jerusalem—a time and a place where the glory of the Lord shines. God’s presence within this city brings an extraordinary illumination, and nations are drawn to this light. This new Jerusalem is not one nation or one city. Rather, it is a place and a people that are in full knowledge of and in communion with the Lord, and who have learned to walk by the light of Christ. No nation can claim this title, and no people have yet learned what it means to live in right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of God’s creation. Yet the images and the movements of this text point to ways in which we as a people—as a community, state, or nation—can walk in God’s paths, thereby letting the Lord’s light shine through us.

Isaiah’s reference to “nations,” and to sons and daughters coming from afar, can lead us to think of people coming to our country today with a similar hope. They come not because our country is the new Jerusalem—far from it. But, they do come here with the hope of finding something better—something safer, more peaceful.

Today in the United States there are more than 40 million foreign-born residents. Some are naturalized citizens; others are trying to moving along the path to citizenship. Some are here as students; others are here for employment reasons.

Whatever their legal status, the vast majority of immigrants in the United States are here because they seek a better life for their families—not a life of luxury or a life of conspicuous consumption, nor a life dependent upon handouts, but a life simply of steady work and sustainable wages. The decision for a migrant to leave his or her homeland in search of employment is what Pope Benedict XVI called in *Spe Salvi* an act of hope: an action based upon their belief that a life more befitting of their human dignity is possible.

Isaiah and other prophets in the Old Testament frequently remind the Hebrew people that they must show particular love and care for widows, orphans, and strangers—which, today, can often be a migrant family or a person new to our community. To be in right relationship with God requires that



we are in right relationship with each other—which includes our call to show mercy, compassion, or assistance to the most vulnerable among us.

If the glory of the Lord is ever to shine among us, one of the challenges we must address in our society is where we fall short of helping our most vulnerable. Ironically, we can be guided in this task by the migrants we are called to help. Isaiah states: *Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart shall throb and overflow, for the riches of the sea shall be emptied out before you, the wealth of nations shall be brought to you.* (Isaiah 60:5) Our openness to the “other” has enormous opportunity to enrich our lives.

Second Reading: *Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6*

From his prison cell, St. Paul writes to the Christian community at Ephesus about the mystery that has been made known to him by the Spirit: that through the Gospel the gentiles are heirs with Israel, members together in the one body and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus. It is this mystery that had Paul writing earlier to the Christians at Galatia: *there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* (Gal. 3:28)

The power of this message is that, as members of Christ’s body, we all share in Christ’s promise of a restored relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. Our sharing in the promise of salvation is a primary source of our dignity as human beings. It is why we need to live as a people redeemed, as a people marked by a sacred dignity. It is why we need to help one another realize our human dignity, which includes recognizing or meeting the basic needs of others that ensure their human dignity is upheld.

The Second Vatican Council fathers remind us that our sharing in Christ Jesus’ promise of salvation is not just about looking beyond this world at what is to come. On the contrary: “. . . the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family . . . a body which already is a foreshadowing of the life that is to come.” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39) In other words, we are called to “make Thy Kingdom come,” here on earth.

We do not need to look far for evidence that not all of God’s children have attained a dignified life that is rightfully theirs as “made in the image and likeness of God.” A dearth of economic opportunity confronting large segments of Latin America, the Caribbean, and elsewhere is placing significant strain on families and often presents them with very difficult choices. In Syria, forced migration is occurring on an epic scale, with Chaldean Catholics being persecuted for their religious



beliefs, and being effectively wiped out in Iraq and the Middle East as the world sits watching. There are also those from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, where the outbreak of gang violence has forced the migration of thousands of unaccompanied migrant children, and mothers with young children, who are fleeing from their violent communities for safety.

These refugees remind us how far we, as followers of Christ, are asked to go in welcoming the stranger among us. As St. Paul writes, we are one body, one Church, and no one should feel like a stranger. To be the Church is to recognize our unity in Christ. It is to welcome and recognize the human dignity and basic needs of new and old members in our communities—whoever she is, wherever he comes from, whatever their family's legal status.

If we are people who celebrate the Good News that everyone shares in the promise of Christ Jesus, we would not tolerate words or actions or public policies that diminish the human dignity or, in effect, create an underclass of immigrant people in our country.

We would recognize that “just laws” are not only laws that protect our border and ensure our nation's or our family's security, but that “just laws” are also laws that uphold the dignity and basic human needs of *all* families—that ensure basic access to healthcare for all children, that ensure access to sustainable work, that ensure access to food and a safe place to sleep. Anything less is our failure to respond to people in need: *Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.* (Mt. 25:40) Anything less is a failure to recognize that within our immigrant community there *grows the body of a new human family . . . a body which already is a foreshadowing of the life that is to come.* (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39)

Gospel: *Matthew 2:1-12*

The second chapter of Matthew's Gospel is filled with motion, with people on the move. Wise men from the East arrive in Jerusalem, asking where the newborn king of the Jews might be found. King Herod sends them to Bethlehem to find the child. After locating the child and offering their gifts, the wise men take a different road to their own country in order to avoid Herod. Then, in the verse immediately following this reading, an angel of the Lord warns Joseph to flee with the infant child and his mother to Egypt—where the Holy Family live as refugees until Herod's death allows them to return to their homeland, Israel.

This story of the visit of the wise men leading to the eventual flight of the Holy Family into Egypt is one that too many of God's children can recognize as their own. Today, there are millions of refugees and asylum-seekers throughout the world—people who have had to flee their homeland



because of war, religious persecution, brutal gang violence, and risks of modern-day slavery. These are people whose journey was not of their choosing but one day became a requirement for their continued living.

We know so well the story of the three kings, the three wise men who came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Some of our favorite Christmas carols celebrate this event, as do most Christmas pageants in Catholic elementary schools. This is the story of today's Gospel reading, Matthew 2:1-12.

Yet, we rarely think about what comes next, in verse 13: Joseph, Mary, and their infant son fleeing for their lives, becoming refugees in Egypt. The story of the Holy Family's sojourn in Egypt parallels the story of many modern day immigrants and refugees—currently, the Syrian Christian and Central American children and families fleeing from harm's way are just two examples.

Long before Matthew wrote about Joseph and Mary fleeing with their child into Egypt, another story was told. The Hebrew prophets spoke of the widows, the orphans, and the strangers—the people of that culture who were most vulnerable and most in need of help. The Torah itself provided the explanation for why the Hebrew people—and we, now followers of Christ—must treat with compassion the refugee and every immigrant: *You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.* (Leviticus 19:34)