



International Solidarity Reflection

Shalom

School Sisters of Notre Dame

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Solidarity with Migrants

Introduction

Migrants are persons who leave their home country and go to a new place of opportunity. Some leave their country with their family to go to a place where they can earn a living. Some leave their home country to gain employment to get money to send back home for their family and relatives. And some leave their home country to evade persecution and unfair treatment.

Call to Prayer

“We commit ourselves: to explore and face the complexity of the economic, social, and political causes of poverty as we work toward the elimination of unjust structures; to reverse those personal and communal choices which exploit the earth and impoverish peoples; to confront injustice through education that challenges and liberates.” (Call of the 20th General Chapter) For years we have had the concerns of the poor as our own. Let us continue along this path.

Experience

Migrants are minority groups who have fewer economic, political, and social opportunities than members of the dominant group. Many minority groups develop when people leave their homeland and settle in another society for many and varied reasons. Most people find it very hard to pull up roots in their native land and move to a strange country. They emigrate to avoid starvation, to get opportunities for a better job, to have a better life, and to be free from deprivation. They desire a much better life for their children.

Migrants have made enormous contributions to the culture and economy of their “new country”. These contributions have been made with great difficulty. However, migrants are thankful for the opportunities to better their own living and that of their family.

Reflection

We, as educators, social workers, and companions of the poor, have experienced working with and for the poor. Reflection on Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, and our own experience enlightens our view of the migrant situation.

There was a young Levite who had resided within the tribe of Judah at Bethlehem of Judah. From that city he set out to find another place of residence. On his journey he came to the house of Micah in the mountain region of Ephraim. Micah said to him: “Where do you come from?” He answered him: “I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and am on my way to find some other place of residence.” “Stay with me,” Micah said to him. “Be father and priest to me and I will give you ten silver shekels a year, a set of garments, and your food.” So the young Levite decided to stay with the man, to whom he became one of his sons.

Picture: M. Monika Schulze, SSND, BY

*Prepared by S. Christine Spour (AF)
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Micah consecrated the young Levite, who became his priest, remaining in his house. Therefore Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord will prosper me, since the Levite has become my priest. (Judges 17:7-13)

Jesus experienced the suffering of exile as a child, and throughout his ministry, the life of a migrant: traveling, teaching, healing, and proclaiming God’s Reign of welcome, love, and salvation for all people. With no place of his own, he relied on the hospitality of others. The love and care we show strangers will be the basis for how we are 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)

“From our perspective as religious we may want to see the world as one interconnected community, where everything and everyone is interrelated. However, we cannot escape the fact that the world today is fractured by its racial differences, by conflicts between different ethnic groups and nationalities, different cultures and religions and philosophies of life. The inability to deal with difference except with hostility and violence is destroying families, cultures, societies, indeed, the planet itself.” (New Moment Document, Circular 03/08, 1.B.)

“To achieve a fruitful pastoral service of communion, it may be useful to update the traditional structures of care for migrants and refugees, by setting beside them models that respond better to the new situations in which different peoples and cultures interact with one another. ...Christian communities are to pay special attention to migrant workers and their families by accompanying them with prayer, solidarity and Christian charity, by enhancing what is reciprocally enriching, as well as by fostering new political, economic and social planning that promotes respect for the dignity of every human person, the safeguarding of the family, access to dignified housing, to work and to welfare.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees on January 15, 2012 from paragraphs 6 and 9)

Action

- Pray for Migrants.
- Find out if there are Migrants in your living area.
- Share the plight of Migrants with others to insure a better understanding of why Migrants leave their own country.

Closing Prayer

God is our refuge and our strength,
An ever present help in distress.

Therefore we fear not though the earth be shaken
And mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

Though its waters rage and foam and the mountains quake at its surging,
The Lord of hosts is with us; our stronghold is the God of Jacob. (Ps 46: 2-4)