

January 13, 2019

***From Fr. Jim . . .***

This past week was National Migration Week. It is promoted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The intention of this National Week is to highlight the importance of migrants and immigrants in our country and to encourage welcome, Christian hospitality, peace and justice.



The Christmas story with the three Magi who traveled from the East to find the baby Jesus and pay him homage and the great message that the gift of salvation is for all people and nations, caravans of dromedaries bearing gifts going to Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph with the child Jesus fleeing into Egypt give indication that migration and immigration was a common way of life for the people in the time of Jesus. Even today's Feast of the Baptism of the Lord that officially ends the Christmas season and marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as an itinerate preacher, supports this theme. How many times did Jesus have to be careful passing through and preaching the Gospel in Samaria?

Yes, migration and immigration is in our Christian spiritual blood and we all accept that everyone is on a journey through this world to the next one. As we journey, we are meant to do so together, hand in hand with all of our brother and sister travelers, supporting one another. We were never meant to do this alone. We must do it together, praising God, building God's kingdom of love, mercy and peace and excluding no one along the way with our eyes constantly fixed on our eternal home of heaven. We are all strangers, no longer!

The following are wonderful prayers from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

**Prayer for Migrant Families:** Loving Father, we pray that you provide divine protection to all migrants, particularly those who are driven from their homes due to war or violence, who are uprooted due to environmental degradation and climate change, or whose material poverty pushes them to find opportunities elsewhere. Show us how we might reach out to these vulnerable populations and help them to begin a new life in a new home. Open our hearts, so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger, as Christ in our midst. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (2015 USCCB, Washington, D.C.)

**Prayer for Migrant Children:** Loving Father, in your infinite compassion, we seek your Divine protection for refugee children who are often alone and afraid. Provide solace to those who have been witnesses to violence and destruction, who have lost parents, family, friends, home, and all they cherish due to war or persecution. Comfort them in their sorrow, and bring help in their time of need. Show mercy to unaccompanied migrant children, too, Lord. Reunite them with their families and loved ones. Guide those children who are strangers in a foreign land to a place of safety and peace. Comfort them in their sorrow, and bring help in their time of need. Show us how we might reach out to those precious and vulnerable children. Open our hearts to migrant and refugee children in need, so that we might see in them your migrant Son. Give us courage to stand up in their defense against those who would do them harm. For this we pray through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (2009 USCCB, Washington D.C.)