



It's About All of Us: On the Future of the Human Family

We are pleased to share *It's About All of Us: On the Future of the Human Family*, selections from Pope Francis' message for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated on September 29.

This piece is comprised of 11 brief excerpts from Pope Francis' entire message in which he explores migration in the context of authentic/integral human development; that is, development of the whole person and of all people together in community. We suggest that you spend time reflecting on a few of these passages each day leading up to or following September 29 to fully appreciate their depth.

We have found Francis's message this year to be both profound and thought-provoking and we trust you will too. We welcome your reflections and your feedback.

Essentials from Pope Francis' Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 29 September 2019

Faith assures us that in a mysterious way the Kingdom of God is already present here on earth (cf. [Gaudium et spes](#), 39). Yet in our own time, we are saddened to see the obstacles and opposition it encounters. Violent conflicts and all-out wars continue to tear humanity apart; injustices and discrimination follow one upon the other; economic and social imbalances on a local or global scale prove difficult to overcome. And above all it is the poorest of the poor and the most disadvantaged who pay the price. (*paragraph 1*)

[T]he presence of migrants and refugees – and of vulnerable people in general – is an invitation to recover some of those essential dimensions of our Christian existence and our humanity that risk being overlooked in a prosperous society. That is why *it is not just about migrants*. When we show concern for them, we also show concern for ourselves, for everyone; in taking care of them, we all grow; in listening to them, we also give voice to a part of ourselves that we may keep hidden because it is not well regarded nowadays. (*paragraph 3*)

It is not just about migrants: it is also about our fears.

The signs of meanness we see around us heighten “our fear of ‘the other’, the unknown, the marginalized, the foreigner... We see this today in particular, faced with the arrival of migrants and refugees knocking on our door in search of protection, security and a better future. To some extent, the fear is legitimate, also because the preparation for this encounter is lacking” (*Homily in Sacrofano*, 15 February 2019). But the problem is not that we have doubts and fears. The problem is when they condition our way of thinking and acting to the point of making us intolerant, closed and perhaps even – without realizing it – racist. In this way,

fear deprives us of the desire and the ability to encounter the other, the person different from myself; it deprives me of an opportunity to encounter the Lord (cf. [Homily at Mass for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#), 14 January 2018). (*paragraph 4*)

It is not just about migrants: it is about charity.

The progress of our peoples... depends above all on our openness to being touched and moved by those who knock at our door. Their faces shatter and debunk all those false idols that can take over and enslave our lives; idols that promise an illusory and momentary happiness blind to the lives and sufferings of others” ([Address at the Diocesan Caritas of Rabat](#), 30 March 2019). (*paragraph 5*)

It is not just about migrants: it is about our humanity.

To be compassionate means to make room for that tenderness which today’s society so often asks us to repress. “Opening ourselves to others does not lead to impoverishment, but rather enrichment, because it enables us to be more human: to recognize ourselves as participants in a greater collectivity and to understand our life as a gift for others; to see as the goal, not our own interests, but rather the good of humanity” ([Address at the Heydar Aliyev Mosque in Baku](#), 2 October 2016). (*paragraph 6*)

It is not just about migrants: it is a question of seeing that no one is excluded.

A development that excludes makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. A real development, on the other hand, seeks to include all the world’s men and women, to promote their integral growth, and to show concern for coming generations. (*paragraph 7*)

It is not just about migrants: it is about putting the last in first place.

Jesus Christ asks us not to yield to the logic of the world, which justifies injustice to others for my own gain or that of my group. ... In the logic of the Gospel, the last come first, and we must put ourselves at their service. (*paragraph 8*)

It is not just about migrants: it is about the whole person, about all people.

In Jesus’ words, we encounter the very heart of his mission: to see that all receive the gift of life in its fullness, according to the will of the Father. In every political activity, in every programme, in every pastoral action we must always put the person at the centre, in his or her many aspects, including the spiritual dimension. And this applies to all people, whose fundamental equality must be recognized. Consequently, “development cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. To be authentic, it must be well-rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man” (SAINT PAUL VI, [Populorum Progressio](#), 14). (*paragraph 9*)

It is not just about migrants: it is about building the city of God and man.

In our time, which can also be called the era of migration, many innocent people fall victim to the “great deception” of limitless technological and consumerist development (cf. [Laudato Si’](#), 34). As a result, they undertake a journey towards a “paradise” that inevitably betrays their expectations. Their presence, at times uncomfortable, helps to debunk the myth of a progress that benefits a few while built on the exploitation of many. “We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community” ([Message for the 2014 World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#)). (*paragraph 10*)

[O]ur response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs:

welcome, protect, promote and integrate. ... If we put those four verbs into practice, we will help build the city of God and man. We will promote the integral human development of all people. We will also help the world community to come closer to the goals of sustainable development that it has set for itself and that, lacking such an approach, will prove difficult to achieve. (*paragraph 11*)

In a word, it is not only the cause of migrants that is at stake; it is not just about them, but about all of us, and about the present and future of the human family. Migrants, especially those who are most vulnerable, help us to read the “signs of the times”. Through them, the Lord is calling us to conversion, to be set free from exclusivity, indifference and the throw-away culture. Through them, the Lord invites us to embrace fully our Christian life and to contribute, each according to his or her proper vocation, to the building up of a world that is more and more in accord with God’s plan. (*paragraph 12*)

Suggested Reflection Questions

1. What points in the above selections most struck you? What new connections or challenges did you encounter?
2. In our diverse societies, what other groups, in addition to migrants, might we be called to “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate?”
3. In what ways are we promoting “integral human development” in our ministries and daily lives? How might we expand these efforts?
4. In what ways do migrants and other vulnerable peoples help us to read the “signs of the times?”

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