



Credit: Migrants & Refugees Section_Vatican

Migration in *Fratelli tutti*

Excerpts

Pope Francis



“LACKING A PLAN FOR EVERYONE”

27. Paradoxically, we have certain ancestral fears that technological development has not succeeded in eliminating; indeed, those fears have been able to hide and spread behind new technologies. Today too, outside the ancient town walls lies the abyss, the territory of the unknown, the wilderness. Whatever comes from there cannot be trusted, for it is unknown, unfamiliar, not part of the village. It is the territory of the “barbarian”, from whom we must defend ourselves at all costs. As a result, new walls are erected for self-preservation, the outside world ceases to exist and leaves only “my” world, to the point that others, no longer considered human beings possessed of an inalienable dignity, become only “them”. Once more, we encounter “the temptation to build a culture of walls, to raise walls, walls in the heart, walls on the land, in order to prevent this encounter with other cultures, with other people. And those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others”.^[1]

¹ Dialogue with Students and Teachers of the San Carlo College in Milan (6 April 2019): L'Osservatore Romano, 8-9 April 2019, p. 6.

“AN ABSENCE OF HUMAN DIGNITY ON THE BORDERS”

37. Certain populist political regimes, as well as certain liberal economic approaches, maintain that an influx of migrants is to be prevented at all costs. Arguments are also made for the propriety of limiting aid to poor countries, so that they can hit rock bottom and find themselves forced to take austerity measures. One fails to realize that behind such statements, abstract and hard to support, great numbers of lives are at stake. Many migrants have fled from war, persecution and natural catastrophes. Others, rightly, “are seeking opportunities for themselves and their families. They dream of a better future and they want to create the conditions for achieving it”.^[2]

38. Sadly, some “are attracted by Western culture, sometimes with unrealistic expectations that expose them to grave disappointments. Unscrupulous traffickers, frequently linked to drug cartels or arms cartels, exploit the weakness of migrants, who too often experience violence, trafficking, psychological and physical abuse and untold sufferings on their journey”.^[3] Those who emigrate “experience separation from their place of origin, and often a cultural and religious uprooting as well. Fragmentation is also felt by the communities they leave behind, which lose their most vigorous and enterprising elements, and by families, especially when one or both of the parents migrates, leaving the children in the country of origin”.^[4] For this reason, “there is also a need to reaffirm the right not to emigrate, that is, to remain in one’s homeland”.^[5]

39. Then too, “in some host countries, migration causes fear and alarm, often fomented and exploited for political purposes. This can lead to a xenophobic mentality, as people close in on themselves, and it needs to be addressed decisively”.^[6] Migrants are not seen as entitled like others to participate in the life of society, and it is forgotten that they possess the same intrinsic dignity as any person. Hence they ought to be “agents in their own redemption”.^[7] No one will ever openly deny that they are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless of origin, race or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love.

40. “Migrations, more than ever before, will play a pivotal role in the future of our world”.^[8] At present, however, migration is affected by the “loss of that sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters on which every civil society is based”.^[9] Europe, for example, seriously risks taking this path. Nonetheless, “aided by its great cultural and religious heritage, it has the means to defend the centrality of the human person and to find the right balance between its twofold moral responsibility to protect the rights of its citizens and to assure assistance and acceptance to migrants”.^[10]

41. I realize that some people are hesitant and fearful with regard to migrants. I consider this part of our natural instinct of self-defence. Yet it is also true that an individual and a people are only fruitful and productive if they are able to develop a creative openness to others. I ask everyone to move beyond those primal reactions because “there is a problem when doubts and fears 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”.^[11]

² Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 91.

³ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵ BENEDICT XVI, Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (12 October 2012): AAS 104 (2012), 908.

⁶ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 92.

⁷ Message for the 2020 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (13 May 2020): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 16 May 2020, p. 8.

⁸ Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (11 January 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 124.

⁹ Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (13 January 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 84.

¹⁰ Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (11 January 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 123.

¹¹ Message for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (27 May 2019): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 27-28 May 2019, p. 8.

“BORDERS AND THEIR LIMITS”

129. Complex challenges arise when our neighbour happens to be an immigrant.^[12] Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided; this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development. Yet until substantial progress is made in achieving this goal, we are obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families, and where they can find personal fulfilment. Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarized by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. For “it is not a case of implementing welfare programmes from the top down, but rather of undertaking a journey together, through these four actions, in order to build cities and countries that, while preserving their respective cultural and religious identity, are open to differences and know how to promote them in the spirit of human fraternity”.^[13]

130. This implies taking certain indispensable steps, especially in response to those who are fleeing grave humanitarian crises. As examples, we may cite: increasing and simplifying the granting of visas; adopting programmes of individual and community sponsorship; opening humanitarian corridors for the most vulnerable refugees; providing suitable and dignified housing; guaranteeing personal security and access to basic services; ensuring adequate consular assistance and the right to retain personal identity documents; equitable access to the justice system; the possibility of opening bank accounts and the guarantee of the minimum needed to survive; freedom of movement and the possibility of employment; protecting minors and ensuring their regular access to education; providing for programmes of temporary guardianship or shelter; guaranteeing religious freedom; promoting integration into society; supporting the reuniting of families; and preparing local communities for the process of integration.^[14]

131. For those who are not recent arrivals and already participate in the fabric of society, it is important to apply the concept of “citizenship”, which “is based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice. It is therefore crucial to establish in our societies the concept of *full citizenship* and to reject the discriminatory use of the term *minorities*, which engenders feelings of isolation and inferiority. Its misuse paves the way for hostility and discord; it undoes any successes and takes away the religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against”.^[15]

132. Even when they take such essential steps, states are not able, on their own, to implement adequate solutions, “since the consequences of the decisions made by each inevitably have repercussions on the entire international community”. As a result, “our response can only be the fruit of a common effort”^[16] to develop a form of global governance with regard to movements of migration. Thus, there is “a need for mid-term and long-term planning which is not limited to emergency responses. Such planning should include effective assistance for integrating migrants in their receiving countries, while also promoting the development of their countries of origin through policies inspired by solidarity, yet not linking assistance to ideological strategies and practices alien or contrary to the cultures of the peoples being assisted”.^[17]

¹²Cf. CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES, A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration: “Strangers No Longer Together on the Journey of Hope” (January 2003).

¹³General Audience (3 April 2019): L’Osservatore Romano, 4 April 2019, p. 8.

¹⁴Cf. Message for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (14 January 2018): AAS 109 (2017), 918-923.

¹⁵Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): L’Osservatore Romano, 4-5 February 2019, p. 7.

¹⁶Address to the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See, 11 January 2016: AAS 108 (2016), 124.

¹⁷Ibid., 122.

“RECIPROCAL GIFTS”

133. The arrival of those who are different, coming from other ways of life and cultures, can be a gift, for “the stories of migrants are always stories of an encounter between individuals and between cultures. For the communities and societies to which they come, migrants bring an opportunity for enrichment and the integral human development of all”.^[18] For this reason, “I especially urge young people not to play into the hands of those who would set them against other young people, newly arrived in their countries, and who would encourage them to view the latter as a threat, and not possessed of the same inalienable dignity as every other human being”.^[19]

134. Indeed, when we open our hearts to those who are different, this enables them, while continuing to be themselves, to develop in new ways. The different cultures that have flourished over the centuries need to be preserved, lest our world be impoverished. At the same time, those cultures should be encouraged to be open to new experiences through their encounter with other realities, for the risk of succumbing to cultural sclerosis is always present. That is why “we need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us, and to regard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect. Patience and trust are called for in such dialogue, permitting individuals, families and communities to hand on the values of their own culture and welcome the good that comes from others’ experiences”.^[20]

135. Here I would mention some examples that I have used in the past. Latino culture is “a ferment of values and possibilities that can greatly enrich the United States”, for “intense immigration always ends up influencing and transforming the culture of a place... In Argentina, intense immigration from Italy has left a mark on the culture of the society, and the presence of some 200,000 Jews has a great effect on the cultural ‘style’ of Buenos Aires. Immigrants, if they are helped to integrate, are a blessing, a source of enrichment and new gift that encourages a society to grow”.^[21]

141. The true worth of the different countries of our world is measured by their ability to think not simply as a country but also as part of the larger human family. This is seen especially in times of crisis. Narrow forms of nationalism are an extreme expression of an inability to grasp the meaning of this gratuitousness. They err in thinking that they can develop on their own, heedless of the ruin of others, that by closing their doors to others they will be better protected. Immigrants are seen as usurpers who have nothing to offer. This leads to the sim-

plistic belief that the poor are dangerous and useless, while the powerful are generous benefactors. Only a social and political culture that readily and “gratuitously” welcomes others will have a future.

¹⁸ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 93.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁰ Address to Authorities, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 June 2015): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7 June 2015, p. 7.

²¹ *Latinoamérica. Conversaciones con Hernán Reyes Alcaide*, ed. Planeta, Buenos Aires, 2017, 105.[119] Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5 February 2019, p. 7.

“THE EXERCISE OF POLITICAL LOVE”

188. These considerations help us recognize the urgent need to combat all that threatens or violates fundamental human rights. Politicians are called to “tend to the needs of individuals and peoples. To tend those in need takes strength and tenderness, effort and generosity in the midst of a functionalistic and privatized mindset that inexorably leads to a ‘throwaway culture’... It involves taking responsibility for the present with its situations of utter marginalization and anguish, and being capable of bestowing dignity upon it”.^[22] It will likewise inspire intense efforts to ensure that “everything be done to protect the status and dignity of the human person”.^[23] Politicians are doers, builders with ambitious goals, possessed of a broad, realistic and pragmatic gaze that looks beyond their own borders. Their biggest concern should not be about a drop in the polls, but about finding effective solutions to “the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime. Such is the magnitude of these situations, and their toll in innocent lives, that we must avoid every temptation to fall into a declarationist nominalism that would assuage our consciences. We need to ensure that our institutions are truly effective in the struggle against all these scourges”.^[24] This includes taking intelligent advantage of the immense resources offered by technological development.

²² Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg (25 November 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 999.

²³ Address at the Meeting with Authorities and the Diplomatic Corps in the Central African Republic, Bangui (29 November 2015): AAS 107 (2015), 1320.

²⁴ Address to the United Nations Organization, New York (25 September 2015): AAS 107 (2015), 1039.

“WAR AND THE DEATH PENALTY”

261. Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. Let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims. Let us look once more at all those civilians whose killing was considered “collateral damage”. Let us ask the victims themselves. Let us think of the refugees and displaced, those who suffered the effects of atomic radiation or chemical attacks, the mothers who lost their children, and the boys and girls maimed or deprived of their childhood. Let us hear the true stories of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories they tell. In this way, we will be able to grasp the abyss of evil at the heart of war. Nor will it trouble us to be deemed naive for choosing peace.