

Migrants, missionaries of hope

2025 World Day of Migrants and Refugees/National Migration Week
September 22-28; October 4-5



Table of Contents

About National Migration Week/ 1

World Day of Migrants and Refugees / 2

Pilgrims on the Way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of Migrants / 3

How can you help? / 8

JUSTICE

FOR IMMIGRANTS

The United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops/Migration and
Refugee Services

www.justiceforimmigrants.org
jfi@usccb.org

About National Migration Week

In a world marked by immense suffering, the plight of migrants and refugees stands out as a pressing global issue. The World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) is an opportunity for global church and the Catholic faithful to engage in prayer, reflection, and action on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are forced to flee their homes. National Migration Week (NMW) is a uniquely US-based celebration that builds on the ideas put forth in WDMR and shaped accordingly to American public. In 2024 we will celebrate National Migration Week September 22 - 28, and WDMR on October 4 - 5.

This year, the theme for both WDMR and NMW is “Migrants, missionaries of hope”. According to the Vatican’s [Dicastery for Integral Human Development](#), this theme “considers the courage and tenacity of migrants and refugees in the light of the current Jubilee. They bear witness to hope for the future despite difficulties. It is the hope of happiness beyond borders

that leads them to entrust themselves totally to God.

Migrants and refugees become “missionaries of hope” in their host communities, often helping to revitalize the faith of local communities and promoting inter-religious dialogues based on common values. They also remind the Church of the ultimate purpose of the earthly pilgrimage leading to the future homeland.”

As Catholics, we are commanded by Jesus (MT 25) to provide support and care for the most vulnerable among us, including the naked, the hungry, the imprisoned, and the stranger. Through this outreach, we are called to accompany migrants at all stages of their journey: from the point of origin, through transit, and to their final destination. Let this year’s WDMR/NMW be an opportunity to reflect on how we might do this more effectively

Migrants, missionaries of hope

Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2025

This year, National Migration Week takes place September 22-28 and culminates with the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR). Although WDMR typically occurs on the last Sunday of September, this year it will take place on October 4-5 to coincide with the [Jubilee of Migrants](#). The primary theme for this year's WDMR is "[Migrants, missionaries of hope](#)," which "highlights the courage and tenacity of migrants and refugees, who bear witness daily to hope for the future despite difficulties."

In solidarity with the Holy Father, National Migration Week is using the same theme as WDMR and emphasizes the ways in which this theme and its application to the migration question is important for the Church in the United States. Given the timing of WDMR this year, we have developed resource for the Jubilee of Migrants, "[Pilgrims on the Way of Hope](#)", which will help people to prepare both for the Jubilee and WDMR.





United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Pilgrims on the Way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of Migrants

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Jubilee of Migrants: Resource Packet

October 4-5, 2025

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

A Jubilee Year is an important and historical event in the life of the Church designed for the faithful to experience God's loving mercy in a special way. Traditionally, a Jubilee is proclaimed every twenty-five years, and the activities include pilgrimages, processions, special celebrations of Mass, and an invitation to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This Jubilee's theme is "Pilgrims of Hope", and it begins on Christmas Eve 2024 in Rome and concludes the following year on the Epiphany in 2026. The Jubilee's activities are meant to encourage Catholics to both receive God's mercy and invite participation in acts of mercy in our daily lives and communities.

The Holy See has designated several Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate diverse groups of people and various

ministries in the Church. The Jubilee of Migrants will be held on October 4-5, 2025; however, these resources can be used for engaging and celebrating migrants at any time throughout the Jubilee Year.

This resource is for anyone who finds it useful. It can be used and/or adapted by dioceses, parishes, schools, campuses, religious communities of men or women, organizations, or individuals to plan to pilgrimage as Jubilarians for Migrants. It might also serve as a catalyst or inspiration for the creation and development of local or year-round resources for migrants living in your community and for those who support them.

For migrant ministries that are making a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome or to a particular Jubilee celebration or designated special location in a diocese or parish within the United States during 2025, this packet can also serve as an aid in the preparation or experience of that trip.

Additional resources for the Jubilee of Migrants and other celebrations can be found online at the USCCB Jubilee Year web pages: available in English at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025> and in Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/jubileo-2025>.



SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

The issue of migration has been a long-standing concern for the Catholic Church leadership and its lay faithful. In the United States, Catholics have long understood themselves as part of an immigrant Church, with waves of Catholic migrants entering the United States throughout its history from all over Europe, Africa, Central America, and Asia. Through this period the Catholic Church has responded proactively to the spiritual and material needs of migrants living in our communities, through the provision of pastoral care, social service programs, education, and other forms of support.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States, in their pastoral letter [*Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*](#) (2000), invited us to enter the mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ. As St. Paul teaches in his first letter to the Corinthians, the mystery affirms that we as Catholics are made part of that Body through our Baptism. By learning to celebrate our individual differences while embracing our union with others, we grow not only in our understanding of Jesus, but in the knowledge of our own true selves.

Such knowledge flies in the face of a culture that promotes fear and “othering” of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. In *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, the Bishops challenge us to embrace our sisters and brothers through four calls: conversion, communion, solidarity, and evangelization.

In their call for conversion, the bishops affirm that we must “confess that today, as in the past, the treatment of the immigrant too often reflects failures of understanding and sinful patterns of chauvinism, prejudice, and discrimination that deny the unity of the human family, of which the one baptism is our enduring sign.” In our increasingly polarized society,

meaningful and intentional encounters across diverse communities is an effective way to counter these “failures of understanding.”

In his 2024 World Day of Migrants and Refugees message, the Holy Father noted that “the encounter with the migrant, as with every brother and sister in need, ‘is also an encounter with Christ.’” We would be remiss to overlook the transformative power that encounter plays when shaping the perceptions of Catholics and their engagement with migrants. When we see the faces of migrants, hear their stories, and engage them directly, there is an opportunity for conversion. We should all take more time to listen.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PILGRIM PREPARATION

One major element of the Jubilee celebration for Catholics is making pilgrimage. For some, that may involve going to Rome, where international pilgrims traditionally visit the Holy Doors of the four great basilicas (Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint Mary Major, and Saint John Lateran). For most others, though, local Jubilee pilgrimages can be made to diocesan or eparchial cathedrals, churches, and/or religious sites.

If headed to Rome for the Jubilee of Migrants:

Should you or your group decide to travel to Rome for the Jubilee of Migrants (October 4-5, 2025), the following may be helpful:

- You can develop a trip on your own or go through a licensed tour operator that specializes or has experience in religious travel. The latter option may cost extra, but it can save a local organizer time; additionally, those operators may have existing connections with vendors and may be able to



advise on travel concerns. PLEASE NOTE: The USCCB does not endorse nor identify any licensed tour operator as the official U.S. tour operator.

- The official [Jubilee events for migrants](#) includes Mass with the Holy Father on Saturday, October 5, 2025, at 10:30 AM (Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls). Pilgrims and groups may also consider taking part in additional activities, either planned on their own or events hosted by other apostolates/groups.
- Prepare for the trip with liturgies, retreats, devotional and service experiences, community building, catechesis, and fundraising, as needed. Take time for prayer, especially with the Blessed Sacrament, as well as practical travel planning (packing, supplies, water, etc.).
- Upon the return home, consider in advance ways to share the experience with others and put into practice the missionary lessons received during the Jubilee moments in Rome.

Catholics who make a pilgrimage to Rome during the 2025 Jubilee Year can obtain a plenary indulgence by visiting at least one of the four major papal basilicas. Even by not traveling to Rome, an indulgence can be obtained because the Jubilee Year is a time when Catholics are especially encouraged to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The [Apostolic Penitentiary](#) lists visiting prisoners, spending time with lonely elderly people, aiding the sick or disabled, and helping those who are in need as instances to obtain an indulgence. Practicing the works of mercy, it says, is “in a sense making a pilgrimage to Christ present in them.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE LOCALLY

If coordinating a local pilgrimage within the United States:

It is highly recommended to make pilgrimage to one's own diocesan or eparchial cathedral or other church(es) or religious site(s) designated by the bishop or eparch. Plan for a local pilgrimage which can take place at any time of year or can be done at the same time as the events for migrants in Rome (October 4-5, 2025). The timing, as well as the exact local destination, is at the discretion of the local organizer(s). Before embarking on a local pilgrimage, consider taking time for prayer and community-building. After returning home (even if the trip was local), take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage experience.

Suggestions for Parishes:

- Sample Prayers of the Faithful: One easy way is to include prayers of the faithful focused on the Jubilee of Migrants on the weekend of October 5, 2025. Connect with the person who prepares the Sunday liturgies at your parish and suggest including prayers of the faithful focused on the Jubilee. For example: *For our bishops, that they will continue in their commitment to lead Catholic social service agencies and encourage parishes in their dioceses to both support lifesaving assistance for refugees around the world and to be active partners in refugee resettlement and provide in their communities a place of welcome, we pray to the Lord.*



For the Christian faithful and all people of good will, that they might find the compassion to walk in solidarity with migrants and the courage to advocate on their behalf, we pray to the Lord.

For U.S. and world leaders and elected officials, that they might work together to end the strife and persecution that gives rise to refugee crises, provide care and protection for refugees forced to flee, and share responsibility in helping them build new lives, we pray to the Lord.

Suggestions for Dioceses and Eparchies:

- Celebrate a liturgy or host a prayer service for members of migrant ministries or cultural diversity activities who are active in the area at the diocesan/eparchial cathedral between October 4-5, concurrent with the Jubilee celebrations happening in Rome.
- Hold a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee walking pilgrimage for individuals involved in migrant ministry or cultural diversity activities from the cathedral (or another site of your choosing) to religious sites, churches, and/or to a Catholic social services center or institution. Consider also inviting the bishop or eparch.
- Post stories about and by individuals active in migrant ministry and cultural diversity on the diocesan or eparchial website, social media channels, and communications (magazine, newspaper, newsletter, etc.) prior to and/or during the Jubilee of Migrants in October 2025.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & DOCUMENTS

[**Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity**](#) (2000) - This document is the vision that the Catholic bishops, as pastors of the

Church in the United States, offer to our people as they welcome the new immigrants and refugees who come to our shores.

- [**Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope**](#) (2003) - The joint pastoral letter of the Mexican and U.S. Catholic bishops provides an overview of migration between their countries, the Church's response to it, and moral principles that should guide our work on the migration issue.
- [**Missionary Disciples Going Forth With Joy: National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry**](#) (2024) - The document *National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry*, *Missionary Disciples Going Forth with Joy* was developed by the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). It was approved by the full body of the USCCB at its June 2023 General Assembly.

- [**Justice for Immigrants \(JFI\) webpage**](#) -

In 2004, the Catholic bishops of the United States committed to immigration reform as a priority of the U.S. Catholic Church, and to creating a culture of welcome in which all migrants are treated with respect and dignity. A diverse group of Catholic organizations with national networks joined the U.S. Catholic bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign (JFI) in 2005 to unite and mobilize a growing network of Catholic institutions, individuals, and other persons of goodwill in support of immigration reform.

- [**Vatican World Day of Migrants and Refugees website**](#) - This is the official Vatican website for Pope Francis' World Day of Migrants and Refugees messages issued during his pontificate. Similar messages are available on the Vatican website from previous popes.



KEY SAINTS

- **Our Lady of Guadalupe (feast day December 12)**, also called the Virgin of Guadalupe, is a Catholic title for the Blessed Mother, Mary, mother of Jesus who appeared four times to a Mexican peasant name Juan Diego. These four Marian Apparitions occurred in December of 1531, where Mary also appeared to her uncle Juan Bernardino, during this time the Mexican territories were part of the Spanish Empire. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patron saint of Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and parts of California. She is also known as the Patron of the Americas, Migrants and Refugees.
- **St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, MSC (1850-1917, feast day November 13)**, also known as Mother Cabrini, founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She was the first American Saint canonized by the Catholic Church. She is the patron saint of immigrants, and she devoted her life to serving Italian immigrant children in New York City. Her devotion founded 67 institutions in 35 years to help the poor, sick, uneducated and abandoned.
- **St. Josephine Bakhita (1869-1947, feast day February 8)** was a Canossian religious sister who converted to Catholicism after being a slave her whole life. She was born in the Darfur region of South Sudan and was kidnapped at the age of 7 by Arabic slave traders who named her "Bakhita" which means fortunate. St. Josephine was sold, abused and mistreated throughout her life, and in 1883 was sold to an Italian Diplomat. During this time, the diplomat had to leave her with the Canossian sisters during his travel, where she was drawn to the Church, and Jesus' mercy. In 1890 she was baptized and confirmed taking the name Josephine. Upon her owner's return, they wanted to take Josephine back and the future

saint refused to go. The Canossian sisters intervened on Josephine's behalf and took the family to court noting that slavery at the time was illegal in Italy, and she had been freed since 1885. St. Josephine was canonized in 2000 and is the Patron Saint for Victims of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery, Patron Saint of Sudan and the Patron Saint of African Catholics in the United States.

PRAYER

Prayer for Migrant Families

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of families.

We are grateful for all the joy and love they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life.

Show mercy to those who travel in danger and lead them to a place of safety and peace.

Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice.

As we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, and St. Joseph the Worker, her spouse, we pray that all migrants may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek.

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, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.

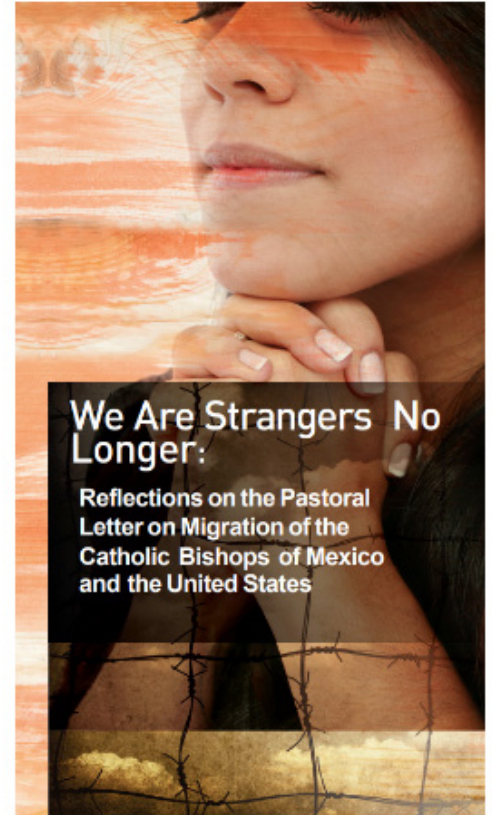


How can you help?

Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope

In 2003, the bishops of the United States and Mexico issued a joint pastoral letter, [Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](#), that presented a Catholic framework for responding to the ongoing migration phenomenon in their respective countries. In doing so, the bishops offered pastoral guidance to Catholics who encounter and engage migrants living and working in their communities. The letter also suggested systematic reforms to U.S. immigration policy and presented an alternative to the existing immigration policy paradigm.

Please take an opportunity to read and reflect on the pastoral letter and recognize the continued importance that it has for the political and pastoral concerns of the Church today. An additional resource – [We are Strangers No Longer: Reflection on the Pastoral Letter on Migration \(sp\)](#) – provides an overview of some of the important themes in the letter and can help as you learn more about it. Please feel free to reach out to Todd Scribner at TScribner@uscgb.org should you have any questions, comments, or would like to share what you are doing on the migration issue in your local community.



Volunteer at a local Catholic Charities

If you don't have a POWIR program in your local community, please be sure to check out where your [nearest Catholic Charities](#) is located. They do amazing work with migrants and refugees every day and could use your expertise and support as a volunteer.



JUSTICE
FOR IMMIGRANTS



United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops
Migration and
Refugee Services