

The Catholic Campaign for Justice for Immigrant Reform
Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh – Adult Groups & Youth Ministry
Part IV of a Four Part Series

In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various Dioceses actively to ensure that these people who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood in the Christian community.

1995 World Migration Day, Pope John Paul II

Scripture

Genesis 1:26-27 The God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Deuteronomy 27:19 “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien, the orphan, and the widow of justice.” All the people shall say, “Amen!”

Psalms 36:7-9 How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink of the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Isaiah 61:1-2 The spirit of the Lord Yahweh has been given to me, for Yahweh has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to the captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favor from Yahweh.

Zechariah 7:8-11 [the Lord] said: Apply the law fairly, and practice kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow and the orphan, the settler and the poor man, and do not secretly plan evil against one another.

Matthew 6:15 Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing.

Church Documents

Faith in the presence of Christ in the migrant leads to a conversion of mind and heart, which leads to a renewed spirit of communion and to the building of structures of solidarity to accompany the migrant.

Strangers No Longer, Catholic Bishops of Mexico & U.S., 2003

Every kind of discrimination in wages and working conditions should be avoided in regard to workers who come from other countries or areas and contribute by their work to the economic development of a people or a region. Furthermore, no one, especially public authorities, should treat such workers simply as mere instruments of production, but as persons they should help them to bring their families with them and to obtain decent housing conditions, and they should try to integrate them into the social life of the country or area which they have come.

Gaudium et Spes, 1965

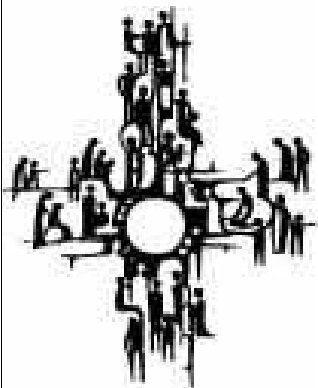
Cain’s question, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gn 4:9), has global implications and is a special challenge for our time, touching not one brother but all our sisters and brothers. Are we responsible for the fate of the world’s poor? Do we have duties to suffering people in far-off places? Must we respond to the needs of suffering refugees in distant nations? Are we keepers of the creation for future generations?

Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles. Peacemaking, as Pope John Paul II has told us, is the work of solidarity.

Called to Global Solidarity, USCCB, 1997

The central message is simple: our faith is profoundly social. We cannot be called truly "Catholic" unless we hear and heed the Church's call to serve those in need and work for justice and peace. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus unless we take up his mission of bringing "good news to the poor, liberty to captives, and new sight to the blind"

Communities of Salt and Light, USCCB, 1993



Preparation

Newsprint and Marker. Prepare on sheet with a title for the prayer the group will write.

Copies of pages 1, and 3.
Paper and pens for each participant.

Contact your regional Catholic Charities office (found on the diocesan website www.dioceseofraleigh.org). Contact the director, and ask what the local issues are for immigrants, and how parishioners can help.

For in-depth learning and preparation, visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org –
The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

Opening Prayer (handout page 3)

Introduction:

Invite everyone to share their thoughts/experiences of the week. On newsprint, list out discoveries made from visiting the two websites: www.justiceforimmigrants.org and www.povertyusa.org

Handout page 3 lists ways we can express our solidarity with immigrants and justice for immigration reform. Read these together. Also describe your exchange with the director of Catholic Charities regional office. Are there other ways to walk with and for our immigrant neighbors? List on newsprint. Is there something we would like to do as a group? Brainstorm

From all we have read, prayed about, experienced, learned:

How are you being called to respond with heart, mind and actions as a follower of Christ for and with our brothers and sisters who are immigrants in our land? Distribute paper and pens and have each person write their response (15 minutes). Invite anyone to share their response.

Discussion: What are your thoughts as we leave? About Catholic social teaching? Immigration reform? New insights into faith, neighbor, God's call to justice and peace?

Close with writing a prayer: On newsprint begin with the first line and invite each to add a line to the prayer. When finished, announce that copies will be made and sent.

Closing Prayer: Group intercessions, reading your prayer together, and Our Father...

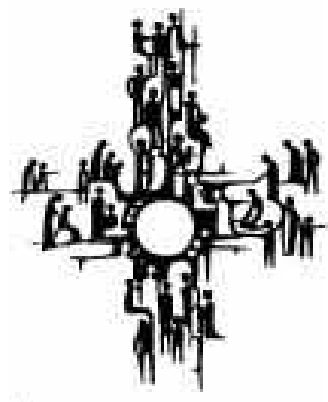
Office of Peace & Justice / Catholic Charities / Dioceses of Raleigh
919-821-9751 / jurski@raldioc.org / www.dioceseofraleigh.org

Four Part Series on Immigrants
Brothers/Sisters All
Catholic Social Teaching
Issues for Immigrants
Our Response



Opening Prayer

Blessed are the wanderers and those adrift.
Blessed are the strangers at our door.
Blessed are the unfed, the homeless on the road.
Blessed is the child crying in pain.
Blessed is the mother working to provide for her children left behind
in her native country.
Blessed are those who welcome Christ to be born again
when they welcome these ones.
Blessed are we who struggle to make a place in our hearts
for all of our brothers and sisters.
Amen.



Actions for Justice for Immigrants

Prayer and fasting

Live simply so that others can simply live (Mother Teresa)

Buy locally, think globally. Support local small farmers at the farmer's market, and small business. You may have to pay more, but we can all do with less.

Buy Fair Trade, supporting small farmers in lands far away, helping people to keep their land and sustain their families where they are. Google: Global Exchange or Ten Thousand Villages

Advocate:

Add your name to the Action Alert section at www.justiceforimmigrants.org This is an easy way to contact your legislators about pending immigration legislation.

Write your congressional representatives, or visit them with a small group when they are in their home office. Contact information can be found at www.ncgov.com

Keep informed. There is no democracy without an informed public. www.justiceforimmigrants.org has the latest legislative information.

Educate Others.

A Parish Resource Kit "Justice for Immigrants" is available. Check with your parish to see what if plans are being implemented, or your group may feel called to lead the way for this to happen. Packets are available through the Office of Peace & Justice, Diocese of Raleigh.

Liguori Publications has a great handout for parish kiosks: *Catholic Tradition and Immigration*. Order at www.liguori.org
Organize a group to watch *Dying to Live* an excellent dvd on the border crossing experience with program guide, and discussion questions.

Contact the Office of Peace & Justice, Diocese of Raleigh for more resources and making connections:
919-821-9751 / jurski@raldioc.org

Pray for the grace of new neighbors and friends who are immigrants. Be alert to new faces and acquaintances, and be ready to extend hospitality in small ways.

Do you have a special gift to extend to immigrants? Legal expertise? Transportation? Serving meals to migrant farm workers? Social service resources? Connect with local agencies to lend a hand.

Links:

Border Links

Witness for Peace

Catholic Charities

Catholic Campaign for Human Development

NC Farm Worker Ministry

Catholic Relief Services