



Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration

The Catholic Church in the United States is an immigrant Church with a long history of embracing diverse newcomers and providing assistance and pastoral care to immigrants, migrants, refugees, and people on the move. Our Church has responded to Christ's call for us to "welcome the stranger among us," for in this encounter with the immigrant, the migrant, and the refugee in our midst, we encounter Christ.

A rich body of Church teaching, including Papal encyclicals, Bishops' statements and pastoral letters, has consistently reinforced our moral obligation to treat the stranger as we would treat Christ himself.

Welcoming the migrant and migration has a central place in the development of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Stories in both the Old and the New Testament highlight the fact that in providing hospitality to the stranger we might also be unwittingly entertaining angels (Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:1-15). Abraham unknowingly provides hospitality to the Lord in Mamre and thus helped secure he and Sarah a child. Not only did Abraham and Sarah show such hospitality, but they themselves were once migrants. The Letter to the Hebrews, highlights the story of Abraham who, by faith, "obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he sojourned into the promised land as in a foreign country (Hebrews 11).

Our very faith has its roots in the decision made by Abraham and Sarah—migrants—who decided to follow God's command to travel to a foreign land.

Pope Francis reminds us that the Holy Family (Mary, Joseph and Jesus) were refugees, experiencing the tragic fate of refugees today, full of fear, uncertainty, and discomfort.

Jesus tells us that when we throw a banquet, we should not invite our relatives or wealthy neighbors, "but the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind" (Luke 14). Does this have any bearing on policies that are put into place with respect to migration? It does not mean that we are obligated to invite all the world's poor into the country and disregard the well-being of those who are already here. Rather the passage challenges us to prioritize

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"You yourselves were once strangers in an alien land..."

those who are suffering and marginalized. It is for this reason that we must balance the demands of the common good of our country, while responding to the needs of those standing on the outside who can benefit from our wealth. This can mean that we should implement a generous immigration policy that enables people to come and work and try to earn a better living than they might have available to them in their homeland. This might also mean that we turn our attention to the developing world and try to help these countries, through such mechanisms as foreign aid and human trade agreements, to build up their economy so that their citizenry can find work and not have to leave their families and communities to find it elsewhere.

Too often the media messages that we hear in relation to migrants is distorted and provides a false understanding of who migrants are and why they come. The rhetoric surrounding this issue can easily bias people in ways that do not properly appreciate the benefits that migrants can bring to our communities.

**The rich body of Catholic Social Teaching reminds us
that our corporate Christian responsibility
is to “welcome the stranger among us.”**



Source: National Migration Week 2018



we are one family under God

**For MORE about Catholic Teaching
on immigration go to**

blessedtrinitymissoula.org

**for direct LINK to the Catholic Bishops:
JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS page:**

**Faces of Immigration; Family Separation; DACA/Dreamers; Catholic Social Teaching;
Community Protection and Preparation Resources**



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