

Letter to migrant communities on the Occasion of the Pastoral Visit of His Excellency,

Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò
President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care
of Migrants and Itinerant People
May 2011

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

I am happy to be with you today for this celebration of the Eucharist, in my capacity of President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. The Pope entrusted to me the task of leading this Dicastery of the Holy See that cares for those who are on the move for many reasons: migrants, refugees, nomads, seafarers, pilgrims and tourists, all those who live and work on the roads and on the streets. I am also happy to forward to you all the blessing of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

One of the most fascinating stories which opens the Old Testament is that of Abraham called by God. He was convinced that the way he lived did no longer correspond to the fulfilment of his life. It had to be changed. And he left the place familiar to him. He left the security of his life, the respect he enjoyed. He instead trusted on the promise of God. Abraham remained faithful, trusting Yahweh, the promise made. The path of Abraham introduced him to a new country and so he could become the father of the faithful. He was the first migrant of the history of salvation.

His story, like that of every migrant man and woman, was all about promise and commitment, tempting and challenging. Something which is valid for all times, but also valid for each one of us. For me, but also for you.

To look for the promised land which God wants to give to us. The promised land is the place where people are eager to do God's will; where people live together in peace. The place where people care for one another, where nobody lacks anything. It is where people are trying to make one another happy. In this sense, every region of the world could become a homeland, because it is the place where we receive and offer justice and peace, shelter and food, a job, a present and a future.

However, it has consequences. One of them is that one has to leave the familiar surroundings. One has to follow new avenues, to take a new course, change its life, in order to answer the new challenge.

Jesus followed that way of Abraham. He answered the call of the Father like nobody else, day in and day out. He moved around, in all directions, without a place for himself. Witnessing to people of the blessings of the Father, reconciling and healing.

He was welcomed and applauded. However, also misunderstood and lonely. But he remained in relation with the Father.

The path of the apostles went first upwards. One day it happened that Jesus and three disciples went on the top of a mountain. On that mountain, the Tabor, the mystery of Jesus was revealed. The Son was shown in His true shape. The disciples were able to see a glimpse of the intimacy that connects Father and Son.

The glory of Jesus was shown to them. This happened when Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus. They represented the law and the prophets, the long history of salvation of the Old Testament. They have met God in cloud and fire, in testing and in the deep silence of prayer. Both were men of God.

That way of Moses and Elijah was also the way of Jesus. A desert road, a road through death. But carried by God's act of faithfulness. And his final resting place is not among us. His tomb is empty. Faithful unto death, Jesus entered the life, the eternal home of the Father.

A long way was waiting for Peter and the other disciples. They had to descend from the mountain and take up their responsibilities in the world. To witness of the glory of the Lord. Hardly grasping what it is going to be and what it means. Wiping away all tears, assisting those in need. A demanding task, which can ask everything. They could continue following Him because they remained committed, faithful to their call.

Such attitude is also requested of us. Listening to his voice, witnessing in society and moving to places and people where we are called to. And during this journey discovering and creating elements of His kingdom.

May we always realize that on our way we are accompanied by the God of life.

May His presence be light in us so that we see what really matters, be the space in our heart so that we do not cut off ourselves from others.

Be fire in us, so that we do not lose the inspiration.

Keep that vision alive in us, so that we remain believing in the promise and moving towards the Kingdom of God's love.

My prayers, my best thoughts and wishes are with you along the journeys of your migrant life, together with the prayers and the support of the whole Church, where you stay in her very heart.

Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò
President of the Pontifical Council for the
Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.