



(CNS photo/Andrew Biraj, Catholic Standard)

Migrant communities as Missionaries of Hope



Dr Trudy Dantis
26 August 2026

Migrants are
among the
“privileged
witnesses of
hope”.

Pope Leo XIV

Migrants, missionaries of hope

World Day of
Migrants and
Refugees
JUBILEE 2025



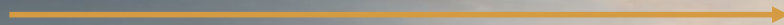
"Migrants, missionaries of hope"



Two experiences

that shaped my understanding of hope

MIGRATION



SYNOD

HOPE · LISTENING · RECIPROCITY · MISSION

PC: Bigstock

“Synodality is the **way of being the Church today** according to the will of God, in a dynamic of **discerning and listening together to the voice of the Holy Spirit.**”



For a synodal Church
communion | participation | mission



PC: JMJ Catholic Products



PC: Cristina Cabrera Jara | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

Migrant communities are not at the margins of a synodal Church. **They are at the centre.**

I. Migrants as witnesses of hope

“My story is not marked by one migration journey, but four.”



Leaving what is familiar. Stepping into uncertainty. Learning to begin again.



I was a stranger and you
welcomed me.

Matthew 25:35

They moved forward not
because they knew exactly
where they were going,
but because they trusted
in God's promise.

*The Israelites, journeying
towards the Promised Land*



Optimism

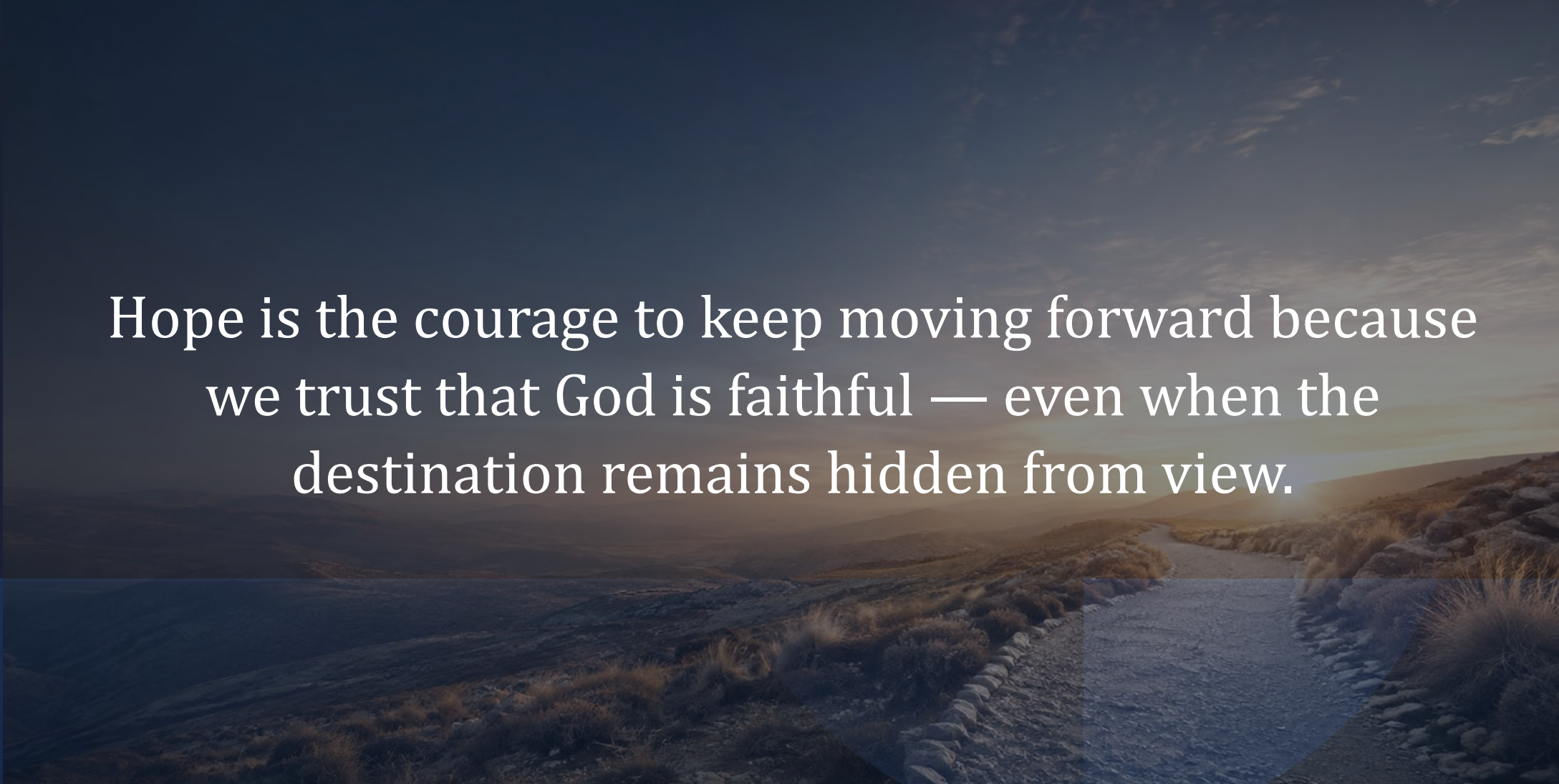
Depends on circumstances.

Assumes things will
probably work out well.

Hope

A theological virtue.

Grounded not in favourable
circumstances, but in trust
in God.



Hope is the courage to keep moving forward because
we trust that God is faithful — even when the
destination remains hidden from view.

PC: Bigstock

II. The Synod as a school of Listening



PC: Trudy Dantis

The Synod on Synodality, 2023 and 2024.

Conversations in the Spirit. More than a methodology — a discipline of listening.



PC: Trudy Dantis



Listening does not always lead us to agreement.
But it can lead us to understanding —
and understanding is often the first step
towards communion.

PC: Trudy Dantis



PC: Trudy Dantis



We carry multiple
loyalties, histories
and loves within us.



PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

Migration does not diminish belonging.
It expands it.

A photograph of a group of people, mostly seen from behind, embracing each other in a warm, sun-drenched forest. The sunlight filters through the trees, creating a bright, hazy atmosphere. The people are dressed in casual summer clothing like t-shirts and shorts. The overall mood is one of unity and support.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE · 2026 SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT

*Living the Gospel in Times of Social
Division*

Rising tensions in our communities,
and a growing normalisation of
abusive and hostile behaviour.

Angertainment

Content designed to provoke anger and division, in an economy where algorithms reward whatever captures our attention.

29 April 2026

The ABS announces that people born in India have overtaken those born in England as Australia's largest overseas-born group — for the first time in the nation's history.

Australian Bureau of Statistics April 29 · 🌐

For the first time India has narrowly overtaken England as the top country of birth for Australia's overseas-born population 🌐
Find out more at <https://www.abs.gov.au/.../8-things-interest-about...>

India narrowly overtakes England as top country for Aussies born overseas

Australia's population by country of birth

Country	Population
India	971,020
England	970,950
China	731,540
New Zealand	637,680
Philippines	412,530
Vietnam	326,630
South Africa	229,950
Nepal	213,580
Sri Lanka	184,800
Malaysia	184,320

2025

Note: For each year's estimates, refer to data cubes in the publication
Source: ABS, Australia's population by country of birth, June 2025

0:17 / 0:17

2.3K 386



People from the March for Australia rally (in the background) at the front of Parliament House in Canberra. *Alex Ellinghausen*

PC: Nine News

F.

“

Kill the Indian. Stand up
for a white man. There's a
civil war coming. We're
gonna kill all the male
Indians, we're gonna drown
all the kids, and we're
gonna sell all their women
into slavery.

Australian Truck Driver

Source: ABC News

   1.7K

2K comments 180 shares

 Like

 Comment

The algorithms had curated two distinct realities.

Two friends. Same school. Same event. Different feeds.



SOME QUESTIONS FOR US

What stories are we being fed about migrants in Australia today?

What grievances are being reinforced?

What fears are being amplified?

What prejudices are being nurtured?

And how do we move beyond them?



PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

In an age of polarisation, **genuine listening** may be one of the most radical acts of hope available to us.

III. Migrants Renew the Church



Listening is not an end unto itself.

Listening → Encounter → Communion → Mission

We discover gifts where we expected differences.

A Church shaped by migration



PC: Sophy Morley

- **TODAY** South Sudan · Nepal · Latin America · the Middle East · Africa





PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

The Church in Australia has been multicultural for generations. **What is changing is our appreciation of the richness it brings.**

IV. The Gift of Belonging

**“She gave me a sense
that I belonged.”**

Someone notices you.
Someone learns your name.
Someone invites you in.
“You belong here.”



Hope often comes through people before it arrives through circumstances.

A meal shared.

A lift offered.

A person who remembers your name.

A community that says: “You belong here.”



This is perhaps one of the Church's greatest gifts.
A place where people discover that they belong.

V. From Welcoming to Reciprocity

A person with curly hair, seen from behind, sits on a wooden bench with metal armrests. They are looking out over a body of water towards a distant city skyline under a hazy sky. The bench is on a wooden pier. A dark semi-transparent rectangle is on the left side of the image, containing the text.

*Belonging is
not created by
geography.*

PC: Bigstock

A house, but not yet a home.

Employment, but not yet belonging.

Legal status, but not yet community.

This is where synodality can become deeply practical

Welcome

“You have a place among us.”

A seat at the table.

Reciprocity

“We need the gifts you bring.”

The table itself is enriched.



PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

Reciprocity is more than a pastoral strategy.
It is an expression of the Church's catholicity.

VI. Missionaries of Hope in a Divided World

Dignity comes first.

**The dignity of migrants and refugees
does not depend on what they contribute.**

Before resilience. Before productivity. Before service.

Every person is no less a gift — and no less the image of God.



PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>



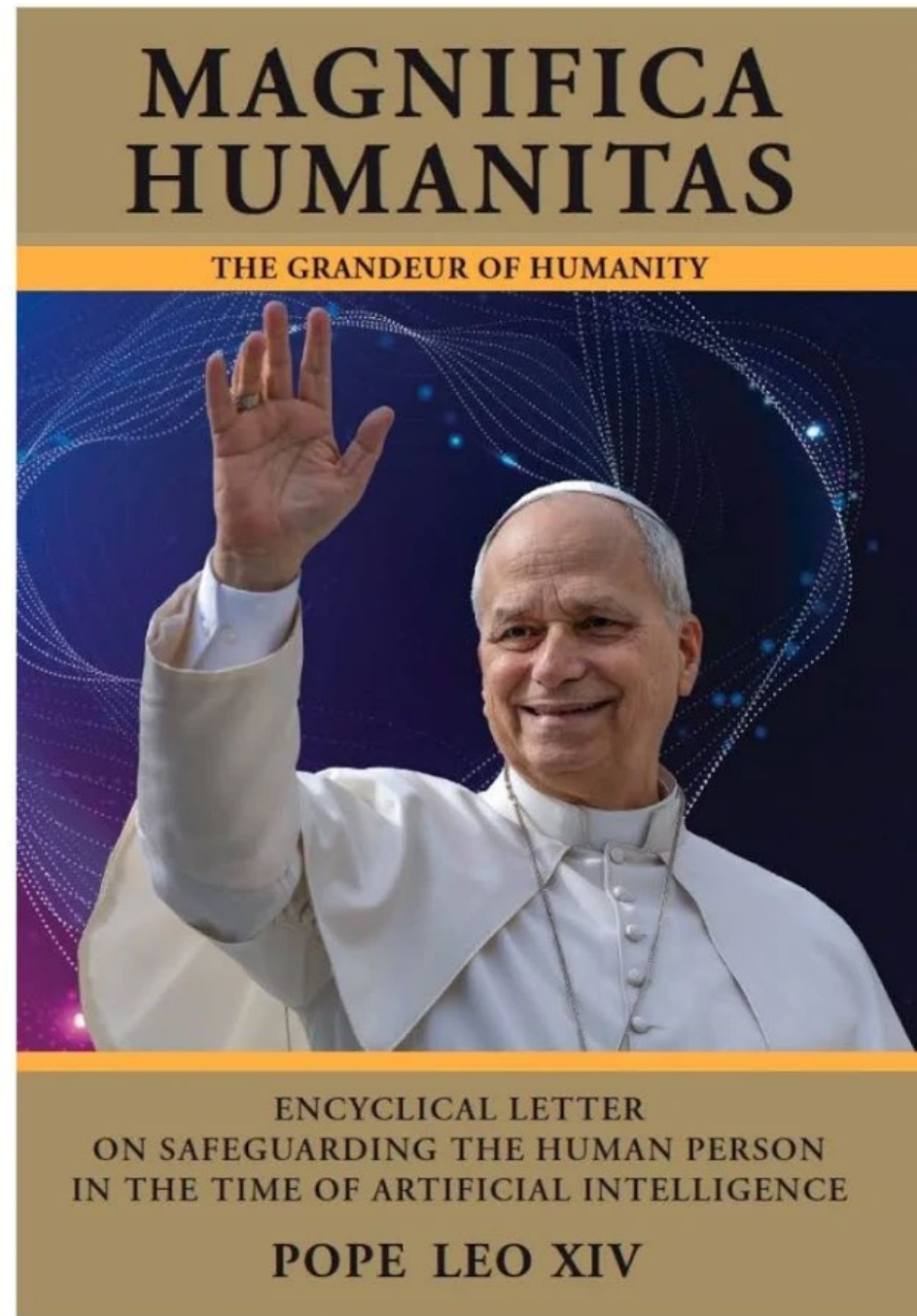
PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

These are not simply migration skills.
They are human skills.

And increasingly, they are
missionary skills.



*“A civilization
of love”*



PC: JMJ Catholic Products

POPE LEO XIV · DILEXI TE

*“Where walls
are built, she
builds bridges.”*

The Church, like a mother,
accompanies those who are
walking.



PC: Sacred Heart Church, Florida, US.

Three tests of reciprocity

- 01** Are migrants and refugees only welcomed — or trusted with real responsibility?

- 02** Are their cultures visible only at multicultural celebrations — or present in ordinary pastoral decisions?

- 03** Do we measure belonging by attendance and services — or by whether people are known, heard and able to exercise their gifts?



Hope is never passive

PC: Cristina Cabrera Jarro | FC <https://www.miamiarch.org/>

The Church is a pilgrim people. Faith is a journey. Encounter changes us.

HOPE MOVES.

Hope crosses borders.

Hope learns new languages.

Hope starts again.

Hope builds homes in unfamiliar places.

Hope gathers people into communion.



Migrant communities have much
to teach us



Hope grows when people listen.

Hope grows when strangers become neighbours.

Hope grows when diversity is received as a gift rather than a threat.

Hope grows when the Church walks together in humility, reciprocity and love.



(CNS photo/Andrew Biraj, Catholic Standard)

Migrant communities are not simply welcomed
by the Church.

They help the Church remember
what it means to be sent.