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Circular Letter to Episcopal Conferences

Church and Human Mobility

*Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants
and Itinerant People*

26 May 1978

Foreword

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In the light of the Second Vatican Council on the Pastoral Office of Bishops, "Christus Dominus" no. 18, Their Eminences and Excellencies, Members of the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People, have taken the opportunity of condensing into a single text the principal pastoral aspects of the phenomenon of people on the move in our time. The aim is to produce a document which will be of special use to Bishops concerned to find ways of increasing pastoral activity in this field, or to lay the basis for it where the extent of the phenomenon is still being grappled with.

The Pontifical Commission prepared a draft which was widely circulated among the Episcopal Commissions for consultation, revised several times and then presented to the Plenary Assembly held between October 13th and 15th 1976, an assembly extended to include the Consultors as well.

The Assembly expressed itself in favour of the document, holding its particular merit to be fact that the subject of people on the move had been considered in its entirety, its different aspects reduced to their common pastoral denominator.

The Assembly also offered some further guidelines and suggestions, which, when taken into account, required further work as well as more consultations, which made possible the present text.

It goes without saying that the normative documents already published by the Holy See remain in force, to which constant reference has been made, to wit: the General Directory "Peregrinans in Terra" of April 30th 1969, the Instruction "De pastorali migratorum cura" of August 22nd 1969, the "Normae et Facultates pro maritimorum atque navigantium spirituali cura gerenda" of September 24th 1977.

Introduction

1. In her concern to bring the Message of Salvation to all men, the Church takes an interest in the situations which follow on from the phenomenon of people on the move. She sees in them a fundamental reflection of the "strata of humanity which are transformed," and her sharing in the problems is a deeply-felt participation.

The Church is particularly aware that the phenomenon of people on the move as seen in our times takes numerous forms, sometimes sharply contrasted, owing

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essentially to their difference of origin: people on the move as a result of the freewill of those concerned is one thing people on the move as a result of compulsion of any kind, whether ideological, political, economic or whatever, is quite another.

This basic distinction is always kept in mind by the Church in the service she gives [567] to the whole world on the move, with a preference following the Gospel, for the poorest, the underprivileged and fringe groups.

2. The principal categories of present day people on the move may be listed, even if [568] not exhaustively, as follows:

emigrants in the usual sense of the word, who have left their habitual abode in order to look for a new life and the means to live it abroad.⁴ For the most part these are workers, but there are also industrial technicians, exiles, and refugees in search of freedom. To them may be added those young students who go abroad in order to improve their technical skills or cultural understanding;⁵

sailors, who go to sea either as members of the merchant navy or as fishermen, and are habitually separated from the family circle and the country of their birth;⁶ travelers by air, whose profession takes them rapidly across the skies to the furthest points of the globe. Included with these are passengers and airport personnel;⁷ nomadic peoples whose life consists of wandering. They are nearly always strangers to society which only with difficulty understands their ethnic and cultural identity;⁸

tourists, who come into contact with new surroundings and societies for reasons of pleasure, health, cultural enrichment or religious pilgrimage.⁹ One could add all those who make continual use of highways.

3. The increase and development of these phenomena, against the background of a [569] world in the process of transformation, create needs and pose questions to which pastoral wisdom needs to give suitable answers. Here we see the necessity for consideration in depth, designed to put new life into the Church's ancient undertaking, and to improve it in the light of a more mature understanding and a richer experience.

The basic criterion was laid down by the Second Vatican Council, which, in the [570] Decree 'Christus Dominus' on the pastoral office of Bishops, no. 18, expressed itself thus:

"Special concern should be shown for those members of the faithful who, on [571] account of their way of life, are not adequately catered for by the ordinary pastoral ministry of the parochial clergy or are entirely deprived of it. These include the many migrants, exiles and refugees, sailors and airmen, itinerants and others of this kind. Suitable pastoral methods should be developed to provide for the spiritual life of people on holidays. Conferences of bishops, and especially national conferences should give careful consideration to the more important questions relating to these categories. They should determine and provide, by common agreement and united effort, suitable means and directives to cater for their spiritual needs. In doing this they should give due consideration to the norms determined, or to be determined, by the Holy See, adapting them to times, places and people."

The Phenomenon of People on the Move

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4. Pastoral programs, the putting into effect of the concern expressed in the Gospels, must take into account the real situation. Therefore this is suitable point at which to take a preliminary glance at the phenomenon of people on the move, in order to gain a clearer understanding of its extent and the factors involved.

A new age

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People on the move are at the same time a cause and an effect of the technical and scientific era which some have dubbed 'post industrial.' It must undoubtedly be numbered among the "critical and swift upheavals spreading gradually to all corners of the earth" which the Second Vatican Council mentions,¹⁰ and which characterize the present period of history.

A very complex, interlocked phenomenon is involved, from which emerge numerous elements which are still the object of scientific evaluation. It is sufficient to note a few of them: the tendency to favor the juridical and political unity of the human family; the notable increase in agreements and cultural exchanges; the interdependence of States, especially from the point of view of economics; the setting up of multi-national business, the imbalance between countries abundantly furnished with resources and poor countries; efforts to guarantee ever wider social benefits; progress in the means of communication and spreading information.¹¹

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The interaction of some of these elements – and it is clear how much these vary both as to nature and influence – produces impulses or occasions movement within or across national boundaries; a movement, furthermore, which can take on many faces and which demands that they be scrutinized to see which of them are growth factors which lift man above himself, and which, on the contrary, point along the road which leads man to confusion.¹²

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Although in different ways and to different degrees, travel has become the lot of the generality of people, to the impressive number of those immediately concerned must be added – and they are even more – those who are indirectly involved: in the first place, their families, and then the workers and personnel employed in the different sectors of travel, etc. But simply calling to mind the families spotlights something with far-reaching implications for humanity, society, morality and religion.

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A world in a state of evolution

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5. Going beyond the aspects mentioned above, there is something deeper. The phenomenon of people on the move invites us to work towards a proper understanding of the world in which we live, and whose structures we see evolving before our very eyes.

The economy has become global; politics, to be realistic, assume worldwide dimensions; social life finds the centers of its animation at world level. It is to this evolving world that reference must be made, as well as to the fact of people on the

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move.¹³

Already it is impossible to remain indifferent to the intermingling of races, [579]
civilizations, cultures and ideologies. The world has become a small place, frontiers
are tending to collapse, space is being reshaped distances annihilated, life here has
its repercussions in the farthest-flung spots: we are all living in the one village.

The profound change in man: light and shade [580]

6. More than the extent and the pace of the phenomenon of people on the move,
what matters is the change which it brings about in a man.¹⁴

It is a profound change, one which penetrates ways of thinking and styles of living, [581]
and therefore one which at the same time sheds lights and casts shade.

The sense of temporaneity is an invitation to prefer the novel aspects of things, [582]
sometimes thereby obscuring the enduring nature and hierarchy of values. The spirit
of man becomes curious and receptive, more alert and open, more ready for
dialogue. In this climate man can be brought to a deepening of his convictions, just
as he can indulge in facile relativism.

Traveling occasions a certain uprooting from one's original surroundings, a marked [583]
loneliness, an isolation in anonymity. It can result both in a more or less conscious
rejection of the new context, and in its uncritical acceptance accompanied by
unfavorable comparisons with previous experience, as well as in an attitude of
passivity, source of cultural and social alienation.

The influence upon faith [584]

7. Traveling as such cannot be reckoned an enemy to faith; and the Church is
making prudent efforts to exploit its potential as an instrument of evangelization.

In certain situations, however, religious practice is often compromised.¹⁵ The split [585]
between faith and culture, which is the "drama of our time,"¹⁶ is heavily stressed
there, making less easy the balance between the ways of a new life and yesterday's
Christian ways. And the more quickly the passage is made from a family-type
society, industrial, complex dynamic and rich, the harsher the crises are and the
more difficult it becomes to protect the unit of the personal conscience.

In any case, there remains the shock of encountering a new world, with its cultural [586]
universe and its system of values and models. Hence that mental retrenching, from
which the quest for religion does not always find its outlet, as is shown by the not
infrequent sympathies vouchsafed for secularized and pseudo-religious ideologies.

Under such conditions, faith cannot be just a legacy to be conserved or preserved; it [587]
is a reality to be deepened, developed, diffused. Thus the Christian is obliged to
give personal affirmation to his faith in a context which is sometimes a veritable
diaspora.

From this flows the necessity that pastoral practice at these levels of human life should adapt itself to their spiritual situation, in order to discover, infuse and build up the faith there. [588]

THE CHURCH AND THE PHENOMENA OF PEOPLE OF THE MOVE [589]

The proclamation of the gospel

8. The Church, “sign and instrument of communion with God and unity among men,”¹⁷ feels herself to be closely involved in the evolution of civilisation, of which mobility is a striking feature and questions herself about the demands made on her presence in this new world, a world which, in a certain sense, reflects her own personality as a pilgrim on the face of the earth.¹⁸

In this way she relives once more the mystery of her Divine Founder, the mystery of life and death.¹⁹ There was a time when, in order to come to grips with the pagan world she had to try and shed her Jewish traits; to meet the barbarians halfway, she abandoned the imprint made on her by the Roman mentality; in order to be at the service of the whole of mankind she has tried to be open to all cultures. A similar inclination leads her today to leaven the reality of immigration with the Gospel, and, if possible, to make of it a means for fulfilling her mission. [590]

9. Her overriding commitment is to the proclamation of the Good News. It is quite true that certain phenomena, such as, for example, emigration, the nomadic and sea-going life, etc. allow of situations where injustice is practised. These the Church feels deeply, and is convinced that it is her duty to express such feelings in way compatible with the fullness of her vocation. However, she considers it her specific and primary duty to proclaim unceasingly the “joyful news” by witness to and explicit proclamation of the Word of God.²⁰ “The history of the Church, from the discourse of Peter on the morning of Pentecost onwards, has been intermingled and identified with the history of this proclamation;”²¹ in many cases the movement of people has exercised a determining or at least notable influence on the birth and growth of new Churches. [591]

At the present time, the striking increase in travel and its calling attention to itself in a wide variety of forms constitute an event of particular significance in the Church’s journey through history, which emphasizes Saint Paul’s grave words: “Woe to me if I do not the preach Gospel!”²² [592]

Without wishing to anticipate what will be stated in the third part when dealing in concrete terms with the Church’s activity, one ought to state beforehand the irreplaceable importance of the spiritual dimension, which comes out, as well as in preaching, in catechesis and the liturgical and sacramental life; in a word, in the sanctification of souls and society. For this vast and complex world of people on the move, too, the Church has to be salt and light. [593]

Catholic travellers [594]

10. Although the Church has equal affection for all men concerned with these phenomena, it is only natural that her first care should be for her own sons and daughters.

The fundamental task imposed by the present context of history consists in re-establishing the links between faith and life.²³ Hence the necessity for searching out how the interplay between the traveller's situation and Christian life works. [595]

Now, the Christian life is essentially a living through of the Passover with Christ, or a journey, a sublime migration towards the total Communion of the Kingdom of God, where everyone and everything is restored in Christ.²⁴ [596]

For its part, travelling tests man's awareness of belonging to a people, following, in a certain sense, in the footsteps of the Chosen People who obtained their freedom from slavery and cooperated with God's plan during the pilgrimage towards the Promised Land.²⁵ [597]

11. The Christian, then, must be helped to stand up to new conditions, to overcome the ensuing discomforts, and above all, to make good use of the implicit liberating dimension of it all, in relation to the plan of salvation. After the example of Moses, his ear turned to his people's cry, the Church listens more intently to the anxieties of the world on the move, and makes them her own. Moreover, since traveling — and, in its own way, for that matter, stability — carries with it serious temptations, the Church tries to forearm the believer against the various forms of 'idolatry' and dangers to which he is exposed.²⁶ [598]

12. Lastly — and it is of the utmost importance — the Church's prophetic voice speaks with liberation from sin and conversion as its constant objective.²⁷ It finds especial meaning in travel, which brings to mind the sense of life as a journey and therefore the final goal of this earthly pilgrimage, whose outcome will be the return to God,²⁸ in participation in the Lord's Passover. [599]

The ecumenical dimension [600]

13. The phenomenon of people on the move is like a crossroads, at which various Christian creeds and denominations come into contact, sometimes in a permanent fashion. The ecumenical significance and dimension becomes apparent in its full extent.²⁹ The common objective of the Christian religions is to preserve and deepen faith in God the Redeemer amid the assaults of encroaching secularism.³⁰ They have a task, also in common: those actions which will lead to full human freedom, and which aim to raise man up, following the spirit and the norms of proper ecumenical collaboration. All this brings to mind the compelling urgency of putting an end to the scandal of the divisions between Christians.

Thus the awareness that the duty of working for union constitutes a strong ground for credibility, as expressed in the Lord's supreme prayer, takes on new force: "That they all may be one: even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that you have sent me".³¹ the sign [601]

of faith and the unity of the Church.

14. Nor are we concerned only with the ecumenical dimension Dialogue with non-Christians, whom modern travel involves more and more sometimes in traditionally Catholic areas of the globe, is also to be borne in mind. In her eager concern for the brotherhood of peoples to become ever closer, and with due respect for the genuine values inherent in the different religions, ³²the Church perceives in this phenomenon a new dimension to her missionary outlook and her ministry of salvation. [602]

MAN'S SALVATION IN A WORLD ON THE MOVE [603]

The Church in dialogue with the world

15. According to the Second Vatican Council's guidelines³⁴ and the line taken and enlarged upon several times by Pope Paul VI, the Church feels herself to be closely united to mankind,³⁵ a participant in "the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time."³⁶ The Church, as the Holy Father proclaims in the Encyclical 'Ecclesiam Suam', "makes herself a message: the Church makes herself a dialogue."³⁷

This is also her attitude towards the world of people on the move, the phenomena of which include, even though in various forms, the hope of a better future, the need to overcome certain evils, and the aspiration to unity and brotherhood. [604]

Far from conforming to worldly criteria, the Church takes care to serve God in the area of people caught up by a world on the move, aware that her own sons and daughters are to be found there more than they used to be. Hence her concern with finding the language suitable for various socio-spiritual situations, without ever obscuring, naturally enough, the essential content of the faith. [605]

In the service of peace [606]

16. But the Church also has the task of animating the whole of social life. She therefore turns her attention to the world on the move in order to restore to it that peace which, as Pope John XXIII stressed in *Pacem in Terris*, rests on four pillars: truth, justice, charity and freedom.

People traveling about take with them manifold opportunities for opening up, for meeting, for unity; but they often run up against demonstrations of individual and collective racism, that fruit of a mentality hardened into closed ways of thought, the mark of a society afflicted by severe imbalances. [607]

These serious problems, which are constantly monitored by the Holy See, are to be kept in mind in pastoral work at all levels. Travel offers the opportunities to give men the formation to engage in interpersonal relation according to those values which are essential for peace. It is, one might say, the social dimension of [608]

evangelization.

Promoting and defending the right of the human person [609]

17. Proclaiming the Gospel permits and demands the full salvation of man, his authentic and effective “liberation,”³⁹ in order to reach the conditions proper to the fullness of his dignity.

The knowledge that, in Christ, the Church has gained about man and which makes her an “expert in humanity,”⁴⁰ obliges her to proclaim solemnly the fundamental rights of man⁴¹ and to make her prophetic voice heard whenever these rights are trampled on and to work constantly and farsightedly to raise man up. [610]

The Church has shown particular concern for the world of workers, with specific attention to emigrants, and the Supreme Magisterium has been the unceasing proclaimer of the rights of man, even on some points going beyond the historical formulae, with reference to the situations arising from the phenomena of a world on the move. [611]

The central core of the Church’s statements is the dignity of the human person, without any possibility of discrimination. From this spring those essential, universal and irrevocable rights which can be summarized as follows: the right to dwell freely in one’s own country, to have a homeland, to move within it and to emigrate abroad, to settle in a new place for legitimate reasons, to live with one’s own family everywhere, to have at one’s disposal the goods necessary for life; the right of man to preserve and develop his own ethnic, cultural and linguistic patrimony, to profess his own religion publicly, and to be recognized and treated in accordance with his dignity as a person under all circumstances.⁴² [612]

The practical application of these rights — and pastoral wisdom bears this in mind — fits into the concept of the universal common good, embracing the full extent of the whole family of peoples and above any classe-based or nationalistic egoism.⁴³ [613]

Furthermore, there exists an indissoluble relation between man’s rights and his duties. The Holy Father has stated, “If the fundamental rights of man represent a good common to the whole of humanity on its journey towards the conquest of peace, it is necessary that all men, as they become ever more conscious of this reality, should be aware that in this field to speak of right is the same as to state duties.”⁴⁴ [614]

The rights of communities [615]

18. It is also important to stress the fact that the defending of rights and the stimulating of the observance of duties are not limited just to the human person considered as an individual, but embrace the rights and duties of man collectively, of groups and minorities. A propos of this Pope Paul VI stated: “We cannot remain indifferent in the face of the urgent need to construct a human society which will guarantee everywhere, to groups and particularly to minorities, the right to life, to personal and social dignity, to development in a protected and improved

environment, and to the equitable distribution of the resources of nature and the fruits of civilisation.⁴⁵

A STYLE OF PASTORAL CARE FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

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Targets for the local Church

19. In their commitment to traveling the road mapped out by the Second Vatican Council, local Churches perceive in the phenomenon of people on the move an encouragement to a fully rounded vision of the common good and to espousing universal Christian brotherhood.

The temptation to restrict oneself to a self-serving vision, forgetful of the needs of other Churches, would be senseless. [617]

There is need, therefore, for an attitude of continuous missionary and apostolic conversion, to wit: [618]

- a) the Church of departure feeling itself obliged to follow up members of the faithful who, for whatever reason, move elsewhere;
- b) the Church of arrival feeling itself deeply sensible of its new duties of service, particularly to those who take up residence in its territory;
- c) both keeping up their own pastoral responsibility in the light of a lively and practically-expressed feeling of reciprocity.

In this way there is brought about in the local Church a unity in plurality, that is, that unity which is not uniformity but harmony, in which every legitimate diversity is taken up into the common and unifying effort.

The pastoral mobility of the Church

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20. From the very fact that man moves about, arises the basic need to reach him where he is living more or less temporarily, and to respond to the specific pastoral problems springing from his situation. "The modern world on the move," affirms the Holy Father, Pope Paul VI "ought to be matched by the Church's pastoral care for it."⁴⁶

At bottom, it is a question of mentality. It does, in fact, need no small effort to overcome habits rooted in the static. It is enough to think, for example, of the difficulties which are met in achieving a distribution of the clergy to cope with the growth of urban developments, the consequence of the flight from rural areas.⁴⁷ [620]

None of this detracts in the slightest from the appreciation of territorial realities, or the parish, its most obvious expression. Place, even when on the move, remains a reality. But travel suggests concepts, even before institutions, which are trans-territorial. Besides, this corresponds to the changed function of place, which, as a result of being on the move, becomes the medium for multiple influences. Looked at pastorally, dioceses and parishes are not just defined in geographical terms; they [621]

are called upon to stretch as far as their members go or live.

Preparation

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21. A basic requirement is the preparation of the faithful for the experience of being on the move. This is ordinary pastoral care, a fundamental aspect of it, which should therefore find its place in the themes chosen for catechesis, preaching and spiritual formation. It is necessary that the Christian should be conscious of the duties of his vocation even when he finds himself outside his normal religious context, whatever his reasons for moving may be. This demand of the local clergy a specific form of updating of themselves which has its roots in the seminary formation.

The extent and variety of tourists' trips cannot leave the Christian communities from which they depart indifferent. Educational ventures, both systematic and as occasion dictates, help to create the correct interior dispositions marked by human and Christian wisdom.

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What can one say relative to those phenomena which result in prolonged and sometimes definitive absences? In such cases, problems of adapting to new surroundings arise as well, with the result of total — including religious — uprooting.

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Take the case of the life of a sailor. The specific pastoral care of sailors takes place long before embarkation, and it attempts to ease their transition to the new conditions of their life, paying particular attention to the young. It disposes them to carry on with their religious life in its new situation, feeding and strengthening the faith in them.

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This requirement takes on particular emphasis in the field of emigration. Migrant workers will have to come to terms with their situation as they find it when they join the Church at their destination. It is indispensable, then, that appropriate anticipatory directions should be given to them, on the basis of a solid religious education.⁴⁸

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Welcoming

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22. A “warm welcome”⁴⁹ is the expression of the Church's charitableness understood in its profundity and universality. It takes in a whole series of attitudes which range from hospitality to understanding and prizing others, which is the psychological pre-requisite for getting to know one another, free from prejudices, and for living together calmly in harmony. Furthermore, a welcome is translatable into Christian witness.

23. This notion takes on clearer motivation when there is some continuity in the transfer from one place to another, which generates a certain stability of persons. The factors which determine, in any case, the goals of pastoral care are ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences. The local Church where these people arrive cannot, therefore, escape from the consideration of its special duty, as laid down by

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Pope Pius XII' in the Apostolic Constitution 'Exsul Familia', of making provision "that foreigners, whether immigrants or passing through, might receive from her a serious and necessary spiritual assistance, at least equal to that which the faithful receive in their dioceses of origin."⁵⁰

Pope Paul VI, expressed himself in similar terms in the Motu Proprio "Pastoralis migratorum cura."^[629] He recalled the exhortation made by the Council to the Bishops on this subject and confirmed that migrants are not only confided to the pastoral ministry in the same way as others of the faithful, but also, on account of their particular state of life, call for a care which corresponds to their specific needs".⁵¹

Emigrants, on account of the peculiarly universal nature of the Church, are not outsiders. The very fact that they are to be found in a given area of the pilgrim Church of God on earth, means they cannot but receive from her the instruments and benefits of salvation. The local Church where they arrive is therefore where the principal onus of pastoral responsibility⁵² for immigrants falls, and it is primarily to it that the above-mentioned grave exhortations by the Council are directed,⁵³ concerning the specific pastoral care of the various classes of people. ^[630]

24. But many other places have lately become real human crossroads. Tourist centers, especially of large-scale tourism, international airports, large motorway junctions and seaports: each of these is an environment which begs for a warm welcome to be extended by the local Churches directly affected. And there is also to be recalled separately, on account of its peculiarities, the phenomenon of nomadism: the Church perceives in it a privileged opportunity to exercise her pastoral concern, the expression of her special love as a Mother, rising above all, sometimes legalized, preconceptions and segregation. ^[631]

25. This welcome is naturally called upon to express itself concretely in special pastoral initiatives. We say "special" in the sense they must be appropriate to their objects, answering, that is, to their mentality, their language and their particular situation. But we are not dealing here with initiatives which are completely self-contained: those who dedicate themselves to this work do so as delegates of the local Churches and communities, which are not in this way exonerated from their responsibilities. ^[632]

Even though people on the move require the creation of new institutions for evangelization, ordinary institutions are called upon to express the same sensitivity. Organizing this welcome, in a spirit of charity, thus leads parishes to be still more of a community, not an anonymous grouping or a mere spiritual service station. ^[633]

Collaboration and solidarity between the Churches to provide pastoral care across frontiers ^[634]

26. We have spoken of the departure Church and the arrival Church. But a territorial entity cannot consider itself an independent unit; it reflects life which did not have its origin there. On the other hand, experience shows that with increasing frequency one and the same local Church is simultaneously a departure Church and arrival Church; while it is affected by the emigration for different reasons of

members of its own faithful, at the same time it is affected by immigration due sometimes to the same, sometimes to other causes.

The pastoral care required by people on the move is necessarily a pastoral care, so to speak, without frontiers. The complexity of people's movements makes itself felt at the level of the Churches: suitable instruments can only be found through collaboration and solidarity between the Churches concerned.⁵⁴ [635]

Forming ecclesial communities amid people on the move [636]

27. The phenomenon of people on the move encourages parishes to develop their proper outreaching vocation: they have less need to go out in search of the world than to put themselves, in a certain sense, at the service of the world.

The parish is the privileged spot where, rising above frontiers and in the joy of universal charity, the Eucharist, sacrament of unity, is celebrated. Nevertheless, the parish is called upon almost to multiply itself, in order to allow authentic Christian cells, real communities imprinted with the spirit of the Gospel, to blossom amid groups of people on the move, as in centers of collective and cultural life in which ideas are worked out. [637]

These communities will be genuine catechumenical centers for those Christians cast into a new situation by the various forms of migration, as well as for those who are seeking the true faith, and they will progressively make possible their full entry into the life of the Church. [638]

THE CHURCH AT WORK IN THE WORLD ON THE MOVE [639]

28. From what has been said up to now, it emerges that the phenomenon of people on the move is an invitation to the Church to realize her own identity and fulfill her own vocation.

This is the attitude the Church has taken, giving the matter particular and practical attention which of itself, constitutes a long and full chapter, of which Pope Pius XII described the outline in the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia," to demonstrate as it were the continuance of an identical animating spirit in the progressive updating of the tools used to respond to the times.⁵⁵ [640]

That document, which embraces all the aspects of being on the move, retains its value even today. It is from the tree's old trunk that the new shoots spring. [641]

A common task: no one in the Church is on the fringe [642]

29. The enormous increase in travel and, on another level, the more mature awareness of herself which the Church arrived at with the Council, lead to her being more actively present and more keenly receptive.

The problem lies with both people and institutions. [643]

As regards people, the concept of the Church as the People of God regains its importance, the Church as a mysterious but marvellous framework made up of elements all of which are active.

On the basis of fundamental common dignity, the variety of ministries, functions and responsibilities emphasises the universality of pastoral concern.⁵⁶ [644]

On the same basis, moreover, is ever more affirmed the innate universality of the Church's organization in which no-one can be considered a stranger or just a guest, or in any way on the fringes of things.⁵⁷ [645]

From this we can arrive at conclusions which are fundamentally important for the pastoral care of people on the move: [646]

a) first of all, the need for the whole people of God to be aware of this phenomenon and its religious, pastoral, apostolic missionary and social implications. It has already been noted that this type of apostolate, even if it does require qualified people and services, cannot be the exclusive work of specialists. They cannot take over the responsibilities incumbent upon the whole Church, nor could their activity be effective without the support and encouragement of everyone. It can never be overstressed that the modern phenomena of travel offer opportunities to exercise to the full the privileges, even before the duties, connected with the Christian vocation. They constitute in other words, a push in the direction of generosity, altruism and creativity all of whose possibilities for expansion it would be difficult to reduce to a formula.

Mobility, in the form it takes at the present time, often create in society areas of discrimination and of relegating to the fringe. Such a phenomenon cannot take place within the context of the Church without dealing a mortal blow to the very notion of Church and emptying the Christian concept of brotherhood of its meaning. [647]

Unfortunately, exemplary results are not always forthcoming when this difficult and decisive point is put to the test. Where mobility is particularly intense and creating problems, it sometimes happens that sections of the Church are not immune to insidious influences of a nationalistic kind. [648]

Full recognition of the nature and mission of laypeople [649]

30. The nature and mission of laypeople, according to Vatican II's conception of ecclesiology, is anchored to the priestly, royal and prophetic dignity of all the members of the People of God,⁵⁸ and is in full concordance with the outlook required by the phenomenon of people on the move.

The basic requirement, which is to leaven the world on the move with the yeast of Christianity, calls, if it is to be fully satisfied, for the formation, encouragement and support of the faithful in the exercise of precisely those responsibilities which fall to them, not in any role of substitution or contingency, but as their Christian vocation. [650]

Since they are plunged into the same conditions of life and work as their brothers, [651] are witnesses to hope in their own surroundings, and are eager to raise those surroundings and promote the values which men are looking for, and this by collective witness too, laypeople are, in a certain sense, in the front line of the Church's battle to spread the message of salvation. The specific field opened up to their activities as labourers in the spreading of the gospel is quite vast.⁵⁹ And the forms which human mobility assume present new and urgent perspectives which render irreplaceable, as a matter of course, the pastoral collaboration of the laity and the task which falls to them, both individually and in the organized apostolate, both within the Church and in relation to the outside world.⁶⁰

Particularly in areas where the faithful, as a consequence of mobility, live an [652] isolated or scattered life, the hierarchy can facilitate the laity in the exercise of the prerogative which the call they received at baptism gives them, entrusting to them particular tasks, both for catechesis and for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word in accordance with prevailing norms.⁶¹

New dimensions of the presbyteral ministry [653]

31. The novel aspects inherent in traveling brings new dimension to the presbyteral ministry. This has in fact already come to pass with the organization of pastoral services for emigrants and sailors. The archetypal figures for this are the missionary or chaplain to emigrants⁶² and the chaplain to seafarers.⁶³ But they are not the only ones.

Given a certain variety dependent on the local situation, there has been put into [654] practice pastoral assistance to tourists, nomads, and airline personnel. This has given rise to the tourists chaplain,⁶⁴ the nomads' chaplain and the airport chaplain. In some countries, faced with the importance taken on by road traffic and the manifold problems which arise from it, a new form of apostolate has taken shape in the hands of the highway chaplain.

32. The Council's guidelines for the Church and their normative application have [655] brought about a renewed impulse and, at the same time, have opened up new areas of apostolic and pastoral creativity.

With a suitable grounding, taking into account the particular demands of institutes [656] of perfection, these fields of the apostolate are open to priests belonging to religious orders, congregations and secular institutes. The Council⁶⁵ and the norms of application issued by the Holy See⁶⁶ encourage and direct them.

33. It is, however, necessary to emphasize that such delicate tasks cannot be [657] performed except by priests who have been adequately prepared. Specific preparation constitutes an inescapable necessity, because of both the nature and efficacy of this kind of pastoral work.

Thinking along these lines, one perceives ever more clearly the need for the [658] spiritual, theological, juridical and pastoral formation in the seminaries and various novitiates for future priests to be geared towards the problems raised by the pastoral

care of people on the move. This is the criterion which is the inspiration of the new norms “De cleri transitu ab una ad aliam dioecesim secundum Concilium Oecumenicum Vaticanum Secundum,” approved by the Holy Father Pope Paul VI on March 16th 1974.⁶⁷

The exercise of his ministry by a qualified priest in the specific area of mobility [659] ought to be held in high esteem by Christian communities, which cannot shirk their duties of justice and charity towards those who are devoted to this arduous task.

34. Obviously, the chaplain’s role will take on different juridical forms according [660] the field of his activity and the duties which are assigned to him. He may be entrusted with a personal parish or a mission with the care of souls or a simple mission or a vicariate,⁶⁸ as is provided for in the assistance of emigrants, and, as far as the mission with the care of souls is concerned, also in some seaports.⁶⁹ The same may be said for those priests who are appointed airport chaplains, chaplains to tourists or nomads, or highway chaplains.

35. In an case, what is of the highest importance is that, over and above the dictates [661] of the law, the pastoral links binding a chaplain to the local Church in which he is serving and the local Church from which he comes should be given their due worth. In no way should he be considered an outsider. On the contrary, parity with the diocesan clergy⁷⁰ is presupposed if he is going to participate fully in the life of the local Church, receive from it the necessary moral and material support, and contribute to carrying out the overall pastoral strategy.

Thinking along this line of ideas leads to the two-way collaboration between [662] chaplains and local parish priests.⁷¹ If this collaboration is sometimes motivated on the juridical level by the accumulation of faculties,⁷² on the pastoral level it always takes its *raison d’être* from the shared eagerness to serve and save souls.

The permanent diaconate [663]

36. The figure of the permanent deacon, expressly foreseen as taking part in the pastoral work of tourism,⁷³ has numerous possibilities of application on the general level of the world on the move and in the various sectors into which it is divided, as a valuable addition to the Church’s presence and service.

Women Religious [664]

37. Sharers with all the baptized in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, women religious are called by the Church to spread the gospel through their intimate union with God and by the witness of an apostolic life and activity, in conformity with their institute particular charism.

The contribution of women religious to the world on the move⁷⁴ which [665] presupposes a specific vocation and competence, finds its real meaning in a total consecration to God, and is demonstrated in the exercise of those gifts which are characteristically feminine.

In the light of experience, which, happily, has been intensified in recent years, the work carried out by women religious deserves the highest commendation, especially in the field of assistance to emigrants. Those to have benefited particularly from it are children and the old sick and the unaccompanied, but they have also undertaken various other pastoral tasks. A further increase in the contribution of women religious, which is widely hoped for, will give new impetus to every sector of pastoral work for people on the move. [666]

Episcopal Commissions [667]

38. The solidarity between Churches is given practical expression in the extraterritorial work of the national episcopal commissions or, where such do not yet exist, the work of the Bishop promoter or delegate of the Conference.⁷⁵ Here one recognizes the meeting and radiation point of collegial and local responsibilities, to which the world of people on the move has constant recourse. This also constitutes an irreplaceable service to individual dioceses, which are not always in a position to cope adequately with the interlinked and overlapping problems involved, or with their very scale of human mobility in its various forms.

In fact, the aim is not to diminish the responsibility of diocesan Bishops, but rather to make it easier for them and to ensure a unity of pastoral action and coordination in a matter which, as has been seen, inevitably breaks across geographical boundaries. [668]

Individual situations may suggest the opportuneness of forming an Episcopal Commission which, on the model of the Pontifical Commission, would embrace the various sectors of travel, or at least those of greatest local incidence. However, it is desirable that the Bishops' responsibility should be discharged by means which are really suitable to the pastoral needs of such of the brethren as cannot sufficiently enjoy the ordinary care of the parish clearly. [669]

The Pontifical Commission [670]

39. One fruit of the Second Vatican Council has been the Pontifical Commission for Migrant and Itinerant Peoples. It is in fact a new expression of the care suggested by the successive creation of the various Works for Emigration and the Work of the Apostleship of the Sea and, on a different level and for other social and pastoral motives, the Apostolatus Nomadum, the Apostolatus Aeris and the Office for the Pastoral Care of Tourists. Gathering together the five institutions, each with its own specific purpose and scope, and conferring on them a definite character in a single organism of the Apostolic See, the Motu Proprio "Apostolicae Caritatis"⁷⁶ gave full weight to the common pastoral denominator linking the various kinds of travel, as it strikes the Church in her concern to spread the gospel. It has also guaranteed the existence of a qualified centralised service with the task of encouraging, promoting and coordinating local energies within the overall vision of that universal reality which is the Catholic Church. With particular consideration for the effects of continual dialogue, the Pontifical Commission activity acquires a special added value from its promotion of meetings and conventions of an international character.

40. The complexity and continuing evolution which are to be observed in the phenomenon of people on the move make necessary, in order to give direction and purpose to the pastoral activity, the work of complementary institutions, designed to keep track of this phenomenon and arrive at an objective valuation of it.

This means pastoral centers for ethnic groups, but above all interdisciplinary study centers, that is, ones which would collate the material necessary for working out and putting into practice a pastoral strategy. Here sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, economists jurists and canonists, moralists and theologians would gather together and, comparing their knowledge and experience along with those who have the care of souls, would contribute to the further understanding of the phenomenon and to proposing the means suitable to cope with it. [672]

Such centers, already operating in various places, are destined to achieve greater efficiency by coordinating their efforts, something which is, in any case, required by the international character of the phenomenon of people on the move. [673]

CONCLUSION

[674]

41. The picture which should emerge is one which includes, in a single ecclesial vision, the contemporary phenomena of people on the move, the most important of which were indicated at the beginning.

It goes without saying, however, that in addition to the common elements, each sector of the phenomenon has its own peculiar characteristics which require particularized reflections of a pastoral nature. These are being dealt with separately, applying the principles and general guidelines set out above. [675]

The Pontifical Commission hopes that it has succeeded in responding to a desire expressed in several quarters. In doing so, it has been moved by a willingness to contribute to an ever greater intensification of pastoral care serving specifically the “ world on the move ”, within the framework of the whole Church’s pastoral service. [676]

The Holy Father Pope Paul VI, by Letter of the Secretary of State no. 345748, dated 4th May 1978, has approved with His own authority the present Document, and has ordered its publication. [677]

SEBASTIAN Cardinal BAGGIO

President

EMMANUEL CLARIZIO

Tit. Archbishop of Anzio

Pro-President

¹ Cfr. Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15.

² Cfr. Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the pastoral office of Bishops *Christus Dominus* n. 18; Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on the missionary activity of the Church *Ad gentes divinitus* n. 38; *Motu Proprio* of the Holy Father Paul VI *Ecc/esiæ Sanctæ* I, 9, AAS 58 (1966) p.763; *Motu proprio* of His Holiness Paul VI *Apostolicæ Caritatis* AAS 62 (1970) pp.193-197.

³ Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Paul VI *Evangelii nuntiandi* n. 19, AAS 68 (1976) p.18.

⁴ Cfr. Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII *Exsul Familia* AAS 44 (1952) pp.649 ff.; *Motu Proprio* of His Holiness Paul VI *Pastoralis migratorum cura*, AAS 61 (1969) pp.601-603; Instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, *De pastoralis migratorum cura*, AAS 61 (1969) pp.614-643.

⁵ Cfr. Encyclical of the Holy Father Paul VI *Populorum progressio* n. 68 AAS 59 (1967) p.290.

⁶ Cfr. Ap. Const. *Exsul Familia* passim; *Leges Operis Apostolatus Maris*, AAS 50 (1958) pp.375-383; *Normae et facultates pro maritimum atque navigantium spirituali cura gerenda* AAS 69 (1967) pp.737-746.

⁷ Cfr. Ap. Const. *Exsul Familia*, AAS 44 (1952) p.670.

⁸ Cfr. Apostolic Constitution of the Holy Father Paul VI *Regimini Ecclesiae universae* n. 52, AAS 59 (1967) pp.885, ff.

⁹ Cfr. Directory of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy *Peregrinans in terra*, AAS (1969) pp.361-384.

¹⁰ Pastoral Constitution of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council *Gaudium et spes*, n. 4,

¹¹ Cfr. Past Const. *Gaudium et spes* nos. 6, 16, 25, 26; Encyclical of Pope John XXIII *Pacem in Terris*, AAS 55 (1963) p.291.

¹² Cfr. Gen. Direct. *Peregrinans in terra*, nos. 8-12; Instr. *De pastoralis migratorum cura* nos. 2-3.

¹³ Cfr. Past. Const. *Gaudium et spes* n. 63; Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father Paul VI *Octogesima adveniens* n. 7, AAS 63 (1971) pp.405-406.

¹⁴ Cfr. Past Const. *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 6-8.

¹⁵ Cfr. Instr. *De pastoralis migratorum cura*. n.4.

¹⁶ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii nuntiandi* n.20.

¹⁷ Cfr. Dogmatic Constitution of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council *Lumen gentium* n.1.

¹⁸ Cfr. *ibid.*, 9 and 48.

¹⁹ Cfr. Decree *Ad gentes divinitus* n.5,

²⁰ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii nuntiandi* nos.21-22.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² I Cor. 9:16.

²³ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, n. 29.

²⁴ Cfr. Phil. 3:10; Rom. 8:17; Past. Const. Gaudium et spes, n.22.

²⁵ Cfr. Gen. 12:1-4; Ex. 14:27-31; Heb. 11:8-10.

²⁶ Cfr. Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, n.4.

²⁷ Cfr. Dog. Const. Lumen gentium, n.48; Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, n.36.

²⁸ Cfr. Dog. Const. Lumen gentium, n.49; I In. 3:2; Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 11-12; Tit. 2:13; Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, n.28.

²⁹ Cfr. Decree of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on Ecumenism Unitatis Redintegratio, n.9; Decree of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on the Apostolate of the Laity Apostolicam actuositatem, n.27; Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, n.13; Gen. Direct. Peregrinans in terra, nos.8 and 27; Normae et facultates pro maritimorum atque navigantium spirituali cura gerenda, art. 12.

³⁰ Cfr. Dec. Ad gentes divinitus, n. 20; Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, n.54.

³¹ Jn. 17:21.

³² Cfr. Declaration of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on non-Christian Religions Nostra aetate, nos.1 and 5.

³³ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, n.53.

³⁴ Cfr. especially Dog. const. Lumen gentium nos.8, 9, 38; Past. const. Gaudium et spes, nos.2 and 40-43.

³⁵ Cfr. Homily of the Holy Father Paul VI at the conclusion of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, AAS 58 (1966) p.6.

³⁶ Past. Const. Gaudium et spes, n.1.

³⁷ AAS 56 (1964) p.619.

³⁸ Cfr. AAS 55 (1963) p.266.

³⁹ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. Evangelii nuntiandi, nos.30-39.

⁴⁰ Paul VI, Message to the Assembly of the United Nations, AAS 57 (1965) p.878.

⁴¹ Cfr. Past const. Gaudium et spes, n.41.

⁴² Cfr. Past const. Gaudium et spes, nos.25-29, 63-69; Decr. Apostolicam actuositatem, n.11; Decr. Nostra aetate, n.5. Pius XII, Radio message on the fiftieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum, AAS 33 (1941) p. 203; Christmas Radio message 1941, AAS 34 (1942) p.17; Christmas Radio message 1942, AAS 34 (1943) p.19-20; Christmas Radio message 1952, AAS 45 (1953) p.41. John XXIII: Encyclical Pacem in Terris, AAS 55 (1963) pp.263-272. Paul VI: Encyclical Populorum progressio, AAS 59 (1967) pp. 257-299; Ap. Lett. Octogesima adveniens, AAS 63 (1971) pp.413-414; Discourse to the European Convention on the pastoral care of migrants, AAS 65 (1973) p.592. Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, nos.5-11.

⁴³ The common welfare of society "... consists in the entirety of those conditions of social life under which men enjoy the possibility of achieving their own perfection in a certain fullness of measure and also with some relative ease.": Declaration of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on religious freedom *Dignitatis humanae*, n.6, Cfr. Encyclical of John XXIII *Mater et magistra*, AAS 53 (1961) pp.421-447; Encyclical *Pacem in terris*, AAS 55 p.272.

⁴⁴ Message to the UN on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights AAS 65 (1973) p. 677.

⁴⁵ Ibid. AAS 65 (1973) p. 674.

⁴⁶ Speech to the European Conference on the pastoral care of migrants, AAS 65 (1973) p. 591.

⁴⁷ Cfr. Decree of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council on the ministry and on priestly life *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 10; Decree *Christus Dominus*, n. 6; *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae*, art. 2, 1- 4.

⁴⁸ Cfr. Instr. *De pastoralis migratorum cura*, n.26.

⁴⁹ Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, n.69.

⁵⁰ AAS 59 (1967) p.290. ., AAS 44 (1952) p.692.

⁵¹ AAS 61 (1969) p. 602.

⁵² Cfr. Instr. *De Pastoralis migratorum cura*, n. 30, 3.

⁵³ Cfr. Decr. *Christus Dominus*, n. 18.

⁵⁴ Cfr. Paul VI, Message to the European Conference on the pastoral care of migrants, AAS 65 (1973) p. 590.

⁵⁵ Cfr. AAS 44 (1952) pp. 649-704.

⁵⁶ Cfr. Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 36.

⁵⁷ Cfr. Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, n. 31; Letter of the Cardinal Secretary of State for the celebration of the "Migrants Day," Teachings of Paul VI, vol. XIV, 1976, pp. 910-912.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Dog. Const. *Lumen gentium*, nn. 31-38.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Ap. Exhort. *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n- 69.

⁶⁰ Cfr. Decr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n.10; Instr. *De pastoralis migratorum cura*, nn.56-61; Gen. Direct. *Peregrinans in terra*, nn.34-47.

⁶¹ Cfr. Decr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n.17; Decr. *Ad gentes divinitus*, n.16.

⁶² Cfr. Decr. *Apostolicam actuositatem*, n.17; Decr. *Ad gentes divinitus*, n.16.

⁶³ Cfr. Ap. Const. *Exsul Familia*, tit II, chp. III, nn.25-31; *Normae et facultates pro maritimorum atque navigantium spirituali cura gerenda*, art.8.

⁶⁴ Cfr. Gen. Direct. *Peregrinans in terra* n.23.

⁶⁵ Ctr. Deer. Christus Dominus, n.35.

⁶⁶ Cfr. Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae I, 29-31; Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, nn. 52.55; Gen. Direct. Peregrinans in terra, nn.30-32.

⁶⁷ Periodical of the Pontifical Commission for the pastoral care of migrants and of tourism 'On the Move', n.9, September 1974, pp.9-12.

⁶⁸ Cf. Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, n.33.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Leges Operis Apostolatus Maris, n. 7, 17; Normae et facultates promaritimorum, etc. art. 8,4.

⁷⁰ Cfr. Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, n.43.

⁷¹ Ibid. n. 39, 1-5; Gen. Direct. Peregrinans in terra, n.22.

⁷² Cfr. Ap. Const. Exsul Familia, Chp. II, art. 36; Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, n.39, 3.

⁷³ Cfr. Gen. Direct. Peregrinans in terra, n.33.

⁷⁴ Cfr. Instr. De pastorali migratorum cura, nn.54.55.

⁷⁵ Cfr. Ap. Const. Exsul Familia, tit. II, chp. I, n. 6; Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae, n. 9; Instr. De Pastoralis migratorum cura, n. 22; Gen. Direct. Peregrinans in terra, n. 15; Leges Apostolatus Maris, n. 5; Normae et facultates de maritimorum atque navigantium, etc. art. 4-5.

⁷⁶ AAS 62 (1970) pp. 193-197.

⁷⁷ Cfr. Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae I, para 4.