

**MESSAGE OF POPE LEO XIV  
FOR THE 111<sup>th</sup> WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND  
REFUGEES 2025**

[4-5 Octobre 2025]

***Migrants, missionaries of hope***

*Dear Brothers and Sisters!*

The 111<sup>th</sup> World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which my predecessor chose to coincide with the Jubilees of Migrants and of the Missions, offers us an opportunity to reflect on the connections between hope, migration and mission.

The current global context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which force millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere. The widespread tendency to look after the interests of limited communities poses a serious threat to the sharing of responsibility, multilateral cooperation, the pursuit of the common good and global solidarity for the benefit of our entire human family. The prospect of a renewed arms race and the development of new armaments, including nuclear weapons, the lack of consideration for the harmful effects of the ongoing climate crisis, and the impact of profound economic inequalities make the challenges of the present and the future increasingly demanding.

Faced with frightening scenarios and the possibility of global devastation, it is important that there be a growing desire in people's hearts for a future of peace and of respect for the dignity of all. Such a future is essential to God's plan for humanity and the rest of creation. This is the messianic future anticipated by the prophets: "Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets... For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew" (*Zech* 8:4-5, 12). This future has already begun, since it was inaugurated by Jesus Christ (cf. *Mk* 1:15; *Lk* 17:21), and we believe and hope in its full realization, for the Lord is always faithful to his promises.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: "The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man and woman; it takes up the hopes that inspire human activities" (N. 1818). What is

more, the search for happiness, and the prospect of finding it beyond one's place of origin, is certainly one of the main motivations for the movement of people today.

This link between migration and hope is clearly evident in many contemporary experiences of migration. Many migrants, refugees and displaced persons are privileged witnesses of hope. Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible. Moreover, we can see the itinerant experience of the people of Israel repeated in their own lives: "O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel. Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it languished; your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy" (*Ps 68:7-10*).

In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes. Here too we can find a clear analogy with the experience of the people of Israel wandering in the desert, who faced every danger while trusting in the Lord's protection: "he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday" (*Ps 91:3-6*).

Migrants and refugees remind the Church of her pilgrim dimension, perpetually journeying towards her final homeland, sustained by a hope that is a theological virtue. Each time the Church gives in to the temptation of "sedentarization" and ceases to be a *civitas peregrina*, God's people journeying towards the heavenly homeland (cf. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Books XIV-XVI), she ceases to be "in the world" and becomes "of the world" (cf. *Jn 15:19*). This temptation was already present in the early Christian communities, so much so that the Apostle Paul had to remind the Church of Philippi that "our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself" (*Phil 3:20-21*).

In a special way, Catholic migrants and refugees can become missionaries of hope in the countries that welcome them, forging new paths of faith where the message of Jesus Christ has not yet arrived or initiating interreligious dialogue

based on everyday life and the search for common values. With their spiritual enthusiasm and vitality, they can help revitalize ecclesial communities that have become rigid and weighed down, where spiritual desertification is advancing at an alarming rate. Their presence, then, should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing, an opportunity to open oneself to the grace of God, who gives new energy and hope to his Church: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (*Heb 13:2*).

The first element of evangelization, as Saint Paul VI emphasized, is that of witness: "All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers. We are thinking especially of the responsibility incumbent on migrants in the country that receives them" (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 21). This is a true *missio migrantium*, a mission carried out by migrants, for which adequate preparation and ongoing support must be ensured through effective inter-ecclesial cooperation.

At the same time, the communities that welcome them can also be a living witness to hope, one that is understood as the promise of a present and a future where the dignity of all as children of God is recognized. In this way, migrants and refugees are recognized as brothers and sisters, part of a family in which they can express their talents and participate fully in community life.

On this Jubilee, when the Church prays for all migrants and refugees, I wish to entrust all those who are on the journey, as well as those who are working to accompany them, to the maternal protection of the Virgin Mary, comfort of migrants, so that she may keep hope alive in their hearts and sustain them in their commitment to building a world that increasingly resembles the Kingdom of God, the true homeland that awaits us at the end of our journey.

*From the Vatican, 25 July 2025  
Feast of Saint James, Apostle*

LEO PP. XIV

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana