

Catholic Teaching on Immigration

Immigrant Justice Resource and Discussion Guide



This meeting kit is adapted from the resource and discussion guide provided by MSJC for use by Marianist communities (lay or religious) and parish groups who seek a deeper understanding and prayerful response to issues related to immigration justice in light of Catholic Social Teaching and the Marianist charism.

Introduction

There are five meeting kits dealing with Immigrant Justice, each of which is designed to be used for one evening. Choose one that seems most relevant or useful for your group and focus on that one at your meeting. All of the Immigrant Justice meeting kits use the same opening and closing prayers.

OPENING PRAYER

Blessed are you, O God, creator of all that is. While most of us live in safe homes with at least the basic necessities of life, we know that not everyone does. Those who suffer from inadequate income, food, or safety because of the color of their skin or the country

where they live are our neighbors. They may not live next door, but Jesus reminds us that even the stranger is our neighbor. Help us to be generous and welcoming as You have been to us. Show us how. Amen.

Food for Thought

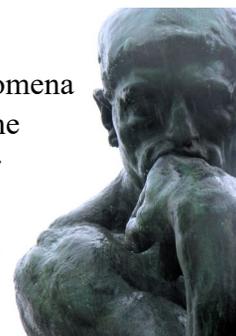
From Scripture

A key event in the history of the Chosen People was their enslavement by the Egyptians and liberation by Yahweh, which led to the commandments to be welcoming of strangers and aliens. Israel's conduct with the stranger is both an imitation of God's care and the primary specific Old Testament manifestation of the Great Commandment to love one's neighbor. (Lv 19:33-34, Dt 14:28-29)

Recalling the migration of the Chosen People from Egypt, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph themselves were refugees in Egypt. The Holy Family has become a figure with whom Christian migrants and refugees throughout the ages can identify, giving them hope and courage in hard times. (Mt 2:13-15)

From Papal Teaching

In response to the worldwide phenomena of migration, Pius XII reaffirmed the Church's commitment to caring for pilgrims, aliens, exiles, and migrants of every kind. All peoples have the right to conditions worthy of human life, and if these conditions are not present, they have the right to migrate. And while recognizing the right of the sovereign state to control its borders, the Church teaches that this right is not absolute and that the needs of immigrants must be measured against the needs of the receiving countries. (*Exsul Familia*, 1952)



John Paul II reiterated the rights of migrants and their families and the call to respect human dignity “even in the cases of non-legal immigration” (*Ecclesia in America*, 1999).

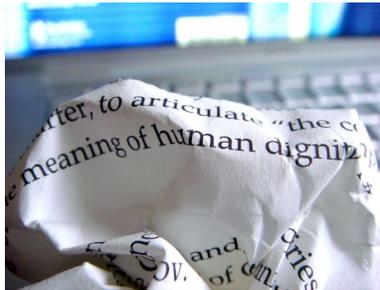
From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

“The universal common good calls for an organization of the community of nations able to provide for the different needs of men...alleviating the miseries of refugees dispersed throughout the world and assisting migrants and their families.” (1911)

“The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. Public authorities should see to it that the natural right is respected that places a guest under the protection of those who receive him.” (2241)

From Catholic Social Teaching

- Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.
- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.



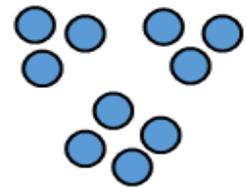
- Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
- The human dignity and human rights of the undocumented migrants should be respected.

The **Marianist Charism** offers these five dynamics in working with migrants and refugees:

- A **Faith in God** that, by prayerfully and gradually doing what we are able to do, justice for immigrants will be achieved.
- A **Confidence that Mary will lead us** to the ways that her son Jesus calls us to act.
- A **Reassurance that our Community Spirit** of working together will lead us to discover together and with others what we cannot do alone.
- A **Family Spirit** with the entire Marianist Family that will give support and enrichment to our efforts.
- A **Sense of Mission** that enlivens our efforts and brings a joy and determination through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What part of this summary of Catholic teaching about immigration is new or a surprise to you?
- What part speaks to you or is particularly challenging to you?
- What part invites you to learn more or reflect further?
- What in the Marianist Charism pushes you to get involved in migration issues?



CLOSING PRAYER

Merciful Jesus, as an infant you fled to Egypt with Mary and Joseph. You were a vulnerable family in a foreign land, looking for shelter and sustenance. Help us to welcome those like you who cross our borders

today. Give us hearts of compassion for all migrants; help us to shape a humane response to their needs and to pass laws and policies that respect the dignity of all who come to our country. Amen.

Some Actions to Consider

As Marianists and as Christians, what action might we commit to take (individually or as a community) to respond to this issue?

- Pray for immigrants, refugees, and all affected by the crisis at our borders.
- Study the immigration issue in more depth. Each person might take one of the resources or resource groups listed below and report back to the group.
- Participate in vigils, rallies, and other gatherings that advocate for immigrant justice.
- Visit or write to immigrants in detention facilities.
- Assist as volunteers at sites providing immigrant sanctuary.
- Become involved by writing letters to political leaders to uphold the dignity of life for asylum seekers and other migrants.

ACTION



Additional Resources

[Calling the Marianist Family to Renounce the Sin of Racism](#)

A call to action by the Marianist Social Justice Collaborative, with many specific action suggestions, that challenges the Marianist Family to commit to ending racism.

[Would Jesus, Mary and Joseph be Welcome in Our Country Today?](#)

A short reflection on this question

[Justice for Immigrants](#)

The campaign by the US Bishops to educate the public about Church teaching on migration and to create the political will for just and humane immigration reform.

[National Immigration Forum](#)

Advocates for the value of immigrants to our nation by promoting responsible federal immigration policy.

[Sojourners Immigration Action](#)

Immigration actions and resources from Sojourners, an interfaith social justice group.

[Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#)

A coalition of religious groups that calls on Congress and the Administration to enact humane and equitable immigration policy reforms.

[Hope Border Institute](#)

A Catholic-based organization that works on the Mexico/US border doing research, advocacy, and leadership development.

[Marianist Statement on Immigration Reform](#)

Sign up at <https://msjc.net/get-involved> to get the monthly *Justice Jottings* and *Immigration Update* from MSJC.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Related resources available at nacms.org include:

Things Marianist: "How Do Marianists Do Social Justice?", by Jim Vogt

The Marianist Founders and Social Justice, Felipe Melcher, SM

Introduction to Social Justice, William J. Ferree, SM

Marianist Charism and Our Life/Work Among the Poor, Joseph Jansen, SM

Marianist Community Meeting Kits are provided for the Marianist Family by the North American Center for Marianist Studies, NACMS. Additional kits, as well as other Marianist Studies resources, are available at <https://nacms.org/>.



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