

**Mass for the 109th World Day of
Migrants and Refugees
September 24th, 2023**

"FREE TO CHOOSE WHETHER TO MIGRATE OR TO STAY"



LITURGICAL SETTING

Today we celebrate the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The Holy Father has chosen to dedicate his message to reflect on the freedom that should characterize the decision to emigrate or to remain. A right that is still not sufficiently protected at the international level: we have the right not to have to emigrate, to remain in our own country.

United in prayer with the universal Church, we begin this Eucharist, praying especially for all those who have been forced to leave their homeland, their customs, their way of dressing, in order to have a better quality of life.

INTRODUCTORY RITES

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen

Greeting

The God of life who always calls us to work in his Kingdom, be with you.

R. And with your Spirit.

Penitential Act

Glory



COLLECT

O God, who founded all the commands of your sacred Law upon love of you and of our neighbor, grant that, by keeping your precepts, we may merit to attain eternal life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



FIRST READING

The prophet Isaiah calls the people of Israel to repentance because, in light of all that God has done for his people, they cannot help but repay him by changing their way of life.

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isahia (Is 55:6-9)

Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call him while he is near.
Let the scoundrel forsake his way,
and the wicked his thoughts;
let him turn to the LORD for mercy;
to our God, who is generous in forgiving.
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
As high as the heavens are above the earth,
so high are my ways above your ways
and my thoughts above your thoughts.

The Word of the Lord



RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm (PS 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18)

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

*Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.
Great is the LORD and highly to be praised;
his greatness is unsearchable.*

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

*The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.*
R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.

*The LORD is just in all his ways
and holy in all his works.*

*The LORD is near to all who call upon him,
to all who call upon him in truth.*

R. The Lord is near to all who call upon him.



SECOND READING

St. Paul tells us his feelings and, above all, the motivations that give his life meaning.

A reading of the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians (Phil 1:20c-24, 27a)

Brothers and sisters:

Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death.

For to me life is Christ, and death is gain.

If I go on living in the flesh,

that means fruitful labor for me.

And I do not know which I shall choose.

I am caught between the two.

I long to depart this life and be with Christ,

for that is far better.

Yet that I remain in the flesh

is more necessary for your benefit.

Only, conduct yourselves in a way worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

This Sunday's Gospel presents us with the parable of the workers who were hired at different times of the day. It is a text that helps us to understand the logic of God's generous and gratuitous goodness. The call to faith and to enter the kingdom of God will always be undeserved, a consequence of his goodness.

Alleluia (Cf. Acts 16:14b)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

*Open our hearts, O Lord,
to listen to the words of your Son.*

R. Alleluia, alleluia

† Gospel St. Mathew (Mt 20:1-16a)

Jesus told his disciples this parable:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard.

After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard.

Going out about nine o'clock,

the landowner saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

and he said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard,

and I will give you what is just.'

So they went off.

And he went out again around noon,

and around three o'clock, and did likewise.

Going out about five o'clock,

the landowner found others standing around, and said to them,

'Why do you stand here idle all day?'

They answered, 'Because no one has hired us.'

He said to them, 'You too go into my vineyard.'

When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman,

'Summon the laborers and give them their pay,
beginning with the last and ending with the first.'
When those who had started about five o'clock came,
each received the usual daily wage.
So when the first came, they thought that they would receive
more,
but each of them also got the usual wage.
And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying,
'These last ones worked only one hour,
and you have made them equal to us,
who bore the day's burden and the heat.'
He said to one of them in reply,
'My friend, I am not cheating you.
Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?
Take what is yours and go.
What if I wish to give this last one the same as you?
Or am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?
Are you envious because I am generous?'
Thus, the last will be first, and the first will be last."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Homily

The profession of Faith



PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, let us pray to our God, the owner of the vineyard, who offers everyone opportunities for a dignified life. Let us ask him for our needs and those of the whole world, that all people may have the possibility of free choice of living where they are respected and valued. To each petition we will respond:

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church, that she may give a witness of service to the neglected in the society by welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants and refugees. Let us pray to the Lord.

R. Lord, hear our prayer.

*For rulers and public officials to guarantee to all people the right to remain in their own country, so that emigration becomes a free choice. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For all those who need to leave their country and their loved ones, so that they can make free decisions and that their dignity is respected. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For all families whose integrity and safety are threatened. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For those who work together in groups and organizations to promote justice, peace and equality, that they may receive the support they need to carry out their mission. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For our community, that we may be more supportive and welcoming to those who come to our community seeking better life opportunities or fleeing situations that put their lives in danger. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

*For our community as we celebrate this 109th Day of Migrants and Refugees, that we may be filled with grace and blessings. Let us pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.***

Lord our God, you are just in all your ways and kind in all your deeds, we ask you to hear our prayers. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

R. Amen.

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY



OFFERTORY PROCESSION

It is suggested to present some symbols that represent the walking of migrants and refugees: backpack, tennis shoes, cap, bread and wine.

BACKPACK, TENIS SHOES AND CAP: *inseparable friends of the migrants and refugees who, loaded with hope and faith, walk in search of a dignified and secure life.*

The backpack carries sadness, suffering and memories, but is also full of dreams and hopes for a dignified and peaceful life.

The tennis shoes allow migrants and refugees to walk long distances.

The hat protects them from bad weather.

BREAD AND WINE: *We offer bread and wine, a sign of the life that migrants and refugees seek for themselves and their families, it is work and effort that will be transformed into body and blood, source of true life.*



PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive with favor, O Lord, we pray, the offerings of your people, that what they profess with devotion and faith may be theirs through these heavenly mysteries.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen



Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

R/. **And with your spirit**

Lift your hearts

R/. **We lift them to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

R/. **It is right and just**

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere
to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty
and eternal God,

You have made your dwelling among us
and have made us your people.
You are our God; we are your people.
A people made up of people
of every race, language, nation, and condition.
A people called to build fraternity,
an us as great as mankind.

And so,
with all the Angels and Saints,
we praise you, as without
end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION RITE

Lord's Prayer

Sign of Pace

Fraction of the Bread

Communion



PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Raise up constantly, O Lord, in your kindness, those you renew with this Sacrament, that we may lay hold of your redemption both in mystery and in the manner of our life. **Through Christ our Lord. Amen.***

CONCLUDING RITE



Greeting and Blessing

May God, the Father of goodness, grant us the ability to create conditions of peace and justice so that all people may live in dignity in their own homeland.

R. Amen.

May almighty God bless you, the Father †, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.



Dismissal

In the joy of knowing that we are disciples of Jesus, called to live fraternity, let us go in peace.





PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

God, Father Almighty,
grant us the grace to work tirelessly
for justice, solidarity and peace,
so that all your children may enjoy
the freedom to choose whether to migrate or to stay.
Grant us the courage to denounce
all the horrors of our world,
and to combat every injustice
that mars the beauty of your children
and the harmony of our common home.
Sustain us by the power of your Spirit,
so that we can reflect your tender love
to every migrant whom you place in our path,
and to spread in hearts and in every situation
the culture of encounter and of care.

R. Amen.

FRANCIS

Rome, St. John Lateran, 11 May 2023



In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks to us through a parable, which is a short and symbolic story that teaches a moral lesson, especially about the tendency to cling to our human criteria rather than to God's. This attitude of thinking that we are worthy of the kingdom of heaven because of what we do, say or think.

The first reading, from the prophet Isaiah, helps us to understand Jesus' parable through a reading key: "My plans are not your plans, and my ways are not your ways." The Responsorial Psalm helps us to praise the Lord who is gracious and merciful, good to all, and of immeasurable greatness.

To understand the Lord's message this Sunday, it is necessary to change our mentality of retribution, to enter into the logic of God's love. Salvation is not the merit of the one who works more hours in the service of the Kingdom, because the old law, based on justice and righteousness, is replaced by the grace of God with the salvation that Jesus has brought us. The kingdom is a gift from God, not a salary. Salvation is a divine initiative of love and communion. It is a new way of relating in which we are all called to work for the kingdom. God calls each of us to work in his vineyard at any time.

He is a God of great heart. The Lord, the owner of the kingdom, calls some to work in His kingdom from the first hour, but others at different times. The important thing is to be called to work in His vineyard. St. Paul tells us, "For me, life is Christ," for which he spent his life serving his brothers and sisters. And in the end, the prize is the Kingdom of Heaven.

One of the ways in which the Lord may be calling us is what Pope Francis invites us to do this Sunday, as we celebrate the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, to commit ourselves to building a more just society in which migration can be a free choice. Pope John Paul II pointed out that *“creating concrete conditions of peace for migrants and refugees means making a serious commitment to the right not to emigrate, that is, to live in peace and dignity in one’s own country.”*

In his message, Pope Francis notes that: *“Migrants flee because of poverty, fear or desperation. Eliminating these causes and thus putting an end to forced migration calls for shared commitment on the part of all, in accordance with the responsibilities of each. This commitment begins with asking what we can do, but also what we need to stop doing. We need to make every effort to halt the arms race, economic colonialism, the plundering of other people’s resources and the devastation of our common home.”*

Another important point that the Pope develops in his message is: *“To make migration a choice that is truly free, efforts must be made to ensure to everyone an equal share in the common good, respect for his or her fundamental rights, and access to an integral human development. Only in this way will we be able to offer to each person the possibility of a dignified and fulfilling life, whether individually or within families. Clearly, the principal responsibility falls to the countries of origin and their leaders, who are called to practice a good politics – one that is transparent, honest, farsighted and at the service of all, especially those most vulnerable.”*

Pope Francis encourages us to reflect that: *“Joint efforts are needed by individual countries and the international community to ensure that all enjoy the right not to be forced to emigrate, in other words, the chance to live in peace and with dignity in one’s own country. This right has yet to be codified, but it is one of fundamental importance, and its protection must be seen as a shared responsibility on the part of all States with respect to a common good that transcends national borders.”*

The Pope reminds us that: *“we are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for a safe and regular migration. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone.”*

In conclusion, for those who have entered into the logic of love, service and gratuitousness, the weight of the day and the suffocating heat are not a punishment, but a privilege. Let us consider ourselves blessed to be called to work in the vineyard of the Lord, and each one of us, with our gifts and virtues, even with our fragility, contributes to the building of the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth, our common home, where we are all children of God, all with possibilities, without exclusion.

FREE TO CHOOSE WHETHER TO MIGRATE OR TO STAY

- ✚ *The migratory flows of our times are the expression of a complex and varied phenomenon that includes different stages, from departure to arrival, including the possibility of return.*
- ✚ *Freedom should always mark the decision to leave one's native land.*
- ✚ *Conflicts, natural disasters, or more simply the impossibility of living a dignified and prosperous life in one's native land is forcing millions of persons to leave their homeland.*
- ✚ *Persecutions, wars, atmospheric phenomena and dire poverty are among the most visible causes of forced migrations today.*
- ✚ *Migrants flee because of poverty, fear or desperation.*
- ✚ *Eliminating the causes of forced migration requires to make every effort to halt the arms race, economic colonialism, the plundering of other people's resources and the devastation of our common home.*
- ✚ *To make migration a choice that is truly free, efforts must be made to ensure to everyone an equal share in the common good, respect for his or her fundamental rights, and access to an integral human development.*
- ✚ *Where circumstances make possible a decision either to migrate or to stay, there is a need to ensure that the decision be well informed and carefully considered, in order to avoid great numbers of men, women and children falling victim to perilous illusions or unscrupulous traffickers.*
- ✚ *Until the right to choose freely whether to migrate or to stay is guaranteed – and here we are speaking of a long process – many people will still have to emigrate in order to seek a better life.*

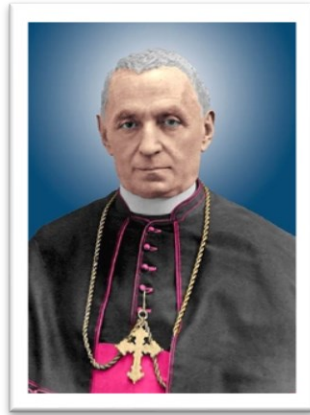
We thank to Fr. Fernando Cuevas for sharing the homily clues.

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In the “Observations and Proposals on Italian Emigration” that Saint John Baptist Scalabrini sent to the deputy of the Italian Parliament Paolo Carcano in 1888, 135 years ago, he defended the freedom of people to emigrate and condemned the situations that forced them to emigrate. This position is developed within the framework of a broader discussion about the benefits and harms of migration for emigrants and their homeland:

“I believe in freedom of emigration, not freedom to coerce it, because, while emigration is good when free, it is bad when coerced”

Scalabrini, Juan Bautista. “El Proyecto de Ley Sobre la Emigración Italiana: Observaciones y Propuestas de Su Excelencia Juan Bautista Scalabrini, Obispo de Piacenza”. Piacenza, 1888. Tipografía dell’ Amico del Popolo. Págs. 32 – 33. En: “Scalabrini Una Voz Viva: Páginas Elegidas de sus Escritos”. Ediciones Scalabrinianas. Merlo, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2004. Págs. 437-438.



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