

Catholic faithful invited to encounter those living on the existential peripheries during National Migration Week and World Day of Migrants and Refugees

WASHINGTON - The Catholic Church in the United States marks National Migration Week (September 19-25) as an opportunity for the faithful to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, refugees, and victims of human trafficking, among others. The week-long observation customarily concludes with the Vatican's World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) on the last Sunday of September.

Instituted in 1914, WDMR is an occasion for the world's Catholics to express concern for vulnerable persons on the move, to join together in prayer, and to increase awareness about the opportunities that migration can provide. National Migration Week has been observed by the Catholic Church in the United States since 1980 -- the same year the landmark Refugee Act was enacted into law. From its inception, National Migration Week has coincided with WDMR out of solidarity with the Holy See and the Universal Church. Catholic dioceses, schools, and other institutions will mark the week with special Masses, interfaith services, educational opportunities, advocacy efforts, and more.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for this year's WDMR is "Building the Future with Migrants and Refugees," and this same theme will be used for National Migration Week. In his annual message, the Holy Father underscores that no one can be excluded from the work of construction that leads to God's Kingdom. "God's plan," he says, "is essentially inclusive and gives priority to those living on the existential peripheries. Among them are many migrants and refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking."

Ahead of National Migration Week, Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, auxiliary bishop of Washington and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

"There has never been a more critical moment to reflect on the issue of migration, as we witness, for the first time in history, over 100 million forcibly displaced persons in the world. This week provides a special opportunity for encounter, accompaniment, and prayer, as well as a chance for Catholics and others of good will to join together in support of those who depend on our collective voice. I am especially mindful of Dreamers, our new Afghan neighbors, Ukrainians fleeing conflict in their homeland, those with temporary protections who have made a home in the United States, and undocumented agricultural workers, all of whom have an important role to

play in building the future of our country — just as they have a role in building the Kingdom of God. May this week help us to experience a renewed sense of what it means to live as brothers and sisters, traveling together on the same journey.”

Educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and other resources for National Migration Week are available on the Justice for Immigrants website. The Vatican’s Migrants and Refugees Section also has resources related to WDMR on its website.