

USCCB Resources in Support of Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12, 2016)

Prayer Service in Solidarity with Migrants

Opening Song: Select a song, such as God Whose Purpose is to Kindle, We are Called, We Are the Light of the World, How Can I Keep From Singing, Healer of Our Every Ill, O Sun of Justice, or My Song Is Love Unknown.

Leader: Let us begin by observing a moment of silence in solidarity with the millions of migrants who risk their lives every day to find a new home, to reunite with family, or are simply in search of economic opportunities to help them support their family who remain behind in their homeland.

[Moment of Silence]

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

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us hold all those impacted by migration in our hearts as we pray Psalm 126:

Leader: Glory to you, God of life and freedom, praise and thanksgiving now and forever.

Psalm 126 (*Read Antiphonally*)

Side One

When the LORD restored the captives of
Zion, we thought we were dreaming.
Then our mouths were filled with
laughter; our tongues sang for joy

Side Two

Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD had done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us;
Oh, how happy we were!

Side One

Restore our captives, LORD,
like the dry stream beds of the
Negeb. Those who sow in tears
will reap with cries of joy

Side Two

Those who go forth weeping,
carrying sacks of seed,
Will return with cries of joy,
carrying their bundled sheaves.

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Side One

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

Side Two

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

All: Glory to you, God of life and freedom, praise and thanksgiving now and forever.

Gospel Reflection: Matthew 25: 31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’ Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Brief Silent Reflection

Leader: Every migrant has a unique story—a story of struggles, hopes and dreams. Let us listen to the story of Saint Juan Diego, who is revered by many Mexican migrants and who holds the honor of being canonized as the first indigenous American saint.

Reader 1: After seeing apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531, the widower Juan Diego told local Bishop Juan de Zumarraga of Mary’s visitations and her desire to have a church built where she appeared to him.

Reader 2: In response to the bishop’s request that he ask Our Lady for a sign, Juan Diego went back to Tepeyac on a December day and implored the Virgin Mary to provide something to convince the bishop of her wishes. The Virgin instructed him to gather flowers from the hillside, and even though roses in December are rare, he was able to fill his cloak with them.

Reader 1: When St. Juan Diego returned to the bishop and opened his cloak, the fresh roses fell to the ground and miraculously revealed an imprint of Our Lady’s image. A church was built on the site, and Juan Diego lived out his days nearby, helping others, praying, and doing penance.

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Reader 2: At his canonization, Saint John Paul II called the new saint “a simple, humble Indian” who accepted Christianity without giving up his identity as an Indian (St. Juan Diego’s Canonization Mass, July 31, 2002).

Intercessions: *Please select intentions from the attached options or create your own for this purpose.*

At the conclusion of the petitions:

Leader: Let us pray:

God of hope and freedom, inspire us to work closely with migrant communities, each of which bring a richness and diversity to American life. Give us the strength to defend their human dignity and advocate for policies that will provide greater protections for vulnerable and at risk migrant populations. Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Leader (only if led by a priest or deacon): Go in peace.

All: Thanks be to God.

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Suggested Intercessions for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)
Please consider the following intercessions at Masses marking the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12), the Third Sunday of Advent (Dec. 11), or the Feast of Saint Juan Diego (Dec. 9).

General Petitions

On Migrants

For bishops in our Church, that they may be encouraged by our prayers and support to lead God’s people in building a culture that respects the human dignity of all migrants, we pray to the Lord,

For Catholics, that God inspire them to take action in their local communities to support and protect migrants and to advocate on their behalf, we pray to the Lord,

For unaccompanied migrant children, that God protect them on their journey and safely reunite them with their families, we pray to the Lord,

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For our neighbors, coworkers, friends, fellow Christians, and all people, that they may grow in their awareness of the issue of migration and become a voice in the public square calling for greater protections for these populations, we pray to the Lord,

For migrant workers, that they may labor in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labor may be truly grateful for what they provide, we pray to the Lord.

For migrants, refugees, and all other strangers in our midst, that they may find strength in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love, we pray to the Lord.

On Refugees

For bishops, that they will persevere in their commitment to refugee resettlement and provide in their communities a place of welcome, we pray to the Lord,

For refugees who are forced to flee from their homes, that God bring peace to them and their country of origin, we pray to the Lord,

For refugees in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere who are experiencing great suffering, that God might bring them to a place of peace and safety, we pray to the Lord,

For refugee children, who have been separated from their family due to circumstance or death, that God will provide his protection, we pray to the Lord,

For an end to all strife and persecution that gives rise to refugee crises, we pray to the Lord,

Government Officials

For the President of the United States and all government leaders: that the Son of God, who became human, will help them understand the great dignity of human persons, and support legislation that better protects vulnerable populations in our midst, we pray to the Lord,

For policy makers in our nation, that God grant them the wisdom to enact laws that provide greater protection for all migrant populations, we pray to the Lord,

For policy makers in our nation, that they will provide the support to migrant populations who yearn for a new beginning, we pray to the Lord.