



Catholic Parish of King's Lynn

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DEACON SHAUN MORRISON'S WEEKLY BULLETIN

Sunday — September 29, 2024

Dear Friends,

Apologies for another email there was much to cover. I have just caught up with the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales website news and noted that tomorrow is also 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wdmr/>

The Church has been celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) since 1914. It's always an occasion to express concern for different vulnerable people on the move; to pray for them as they face many challenges; and to increase awareness about the opportunities that migration offers.

In a message to mark the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Bishop Paul McAleenan has praised the Catholic community in England and Wales for the generous welcome and kindness many offer to refugees and migrants.

"Fundamental to our Christian faith is the belief that we are all a pilgrim people on our journey to our true homeland. God is with us and we travel together," says Bishop McAleenan, the Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees for the Bishops' Conference. "They are looking for a place to settle, where they can live in peace with their families and have the opportunity to prosper. They are, indeed, a pilgrim people. And God walks with them."

The theme of Pope Francis' message for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: ***God walks with His people***. In this message, the Holy Father reminds us that all of us, God's people, are migrants on this earth, on our way to the "true homeland", the Kingdom of Heaven.

Migrants are a contemporary icon of this people on a journey, of the Church on a journey, and at the same time, it is in them and in all our vulnerable

brothers and sisters that we can encounter the Lord who walks with us.

[God walks with His people – Pope Francis' appeal](#)

Pope Francis' Message:

Dear brothers and sisters!

Last 29 October marked the conclusion of the First Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. This session allowed us to deepen our understanding of synodality as part of the Church's fundamental vocation. "Synodality is mainly presented as a joint journey of the People of God and as a fruitful dialogue between the charisms and ministries at the service of the coming of the Kingdom" (Synthesis Report, Introduction).

Emphasizing the synodal dimension allows the Church to rediscover its itinerant nature, as the People of God journeying through history on pilgrimage, "migrating", we could say, toward the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Lumen Gentium, 49). The biblical narrative of Exodus, depicting the Israelites on their way to the promised land, naturally comes to mind: a long journey from slavery to freedom prefiguring the Church's journey toward her final encounter with the Lord.

Likewise, it is possible to see in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God's people on their way to the eternal homeland. Their journeys of hope remind us that "our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ". (Phil 3:20).

The images of the biblical exodus and of migrants share several similarities. Like the people of Israel in the time of Moses, migrants often flee from oppression, abuse, insecurity, discrimination, and lack of opportunities for development. Similar to the Jews in the desert, migrants encounter many obstacles in their path: they are tried by thirst and

hunger; they are exhausted by toil and disease; they are tempted by despair.

Yet the fundamental reality of the Exodus, of every exodus, is that God precedes and accompanies his people and all his children in every time and place. God's presence in the midst of the people is a certainty of salvation history: "The Lord your God goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you" (Deut 31:6). For the people who came out of Egypt, this presence manifested itself in different forms: a pillar of cloud and fire showing and illuminating the way (cf. Ex 13:21), the meeting tent that protected the ark of the covenant, making God's closeness tangible (cf. Ex 33:7), the pole with the bronze serpent assuring divine protection (cf. Nm 21:8-9), manna and water (cf. Ex 16-17) as God's gifts to the hungry and thirsty people. The tent is a form of presence especially dear to the Lord. During David's reign, God chose to dwell in a tent, not a temple, so that he could walk with his people, "from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling" (1 Chr 17:5).

Many migrants experience God as their traveling companion, guide and anchor of salvation. They entrust themselves to him before setting out and seek him in times of need. In him, they find consolation in moments of discouragement. Thanks to him, there are good Samaritans along the way. In prayer, they confide their hopes to him. How many Bibles, copies of the Gospels, prayer books and rosaries accompany migrants on their journeys across deserts, rivers, seas and the borders of every continent!

God not only walks with his people, but also within them, in the sense that he identifies himself with men and women on their journey through history, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalized. In this we see an extension of the mystery of the Incarnation.

For this reason, the encounter with the migrant, as with every brother and sister in need, "is also an encounter with Christ. He himself said so. It is he who knocks on our door, hungry, thirsty, an outsider, naked, sick and imprisoned, asking to be met and assisted" (Homily, Mass with Participants in the "Free from Fear" Meeting, Sacrofano, 15 February 2019). The final judgment in Matthew 25 leaves no doubt: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me". (v. 35); and again "truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of

mine, you did it to me" (v. 40). Every encounter along the way represents an opportunity to meet the Lord; it is an occasion charged with salvation, because Jesus is present in the sister or brother in need of our help. In this sense, the poor save us, because they enable us to encounter the face of the Lord (cf. Message for the Third World Day of the Poor, 17 November 2019).

Dear brothers and sisters, on this day dedicated to migrants and refugees, let us unite in prayer for all those who have had to leave their land in search of dignified living conditions. May we journey together with them, be "synodal" together, and entrust them, as well as the forthcoming Synod Assembly, "to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a sign of sure hope and consolation to the faithful People of God as they continue their journey" (XVI Ordinary General Assembly Synthesis Report: Proceeding Along the Journey).

Prayer

**God, Almighty Father,
we are your pilgrim Church
journeying towards the Kingdom of heaven.
We live in our homeland,
but as if we were foreigners.
Every foreign place is our home,
yet every native land is foreign to us.
Though we live on earth,
our true citizenship is in heaven.
Do not let us become possessive
of the portion of the world
you have given us as a temporary home.
Help us to keep walking,
together with our migrant brothers and sisters,
toward the eternal dwelling you have prepared
for us.
Open our eyes and our hearts
so that every encounter with those in need
becomes an encounter with Jesus, your Son
and our Lord.
Amen.**

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/20240524-world-migrants-day-2024.html>

God bless,

Shaun

Deacon Shaun Morrison