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Pontiff: Gospel Requires Sensitivity for Migrants

Recalls How Jesus Himself Was a Refugee

VATICAN CITY, JAN. 17, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI is exhorting Christians to be sensitive to the plight of migrants and refugees as the spirit of the Gospel requires, recalling that the Infant Jesus himself was once a refugee. The Pope spoke up today on behalf of people living away from their homelands during his address before praying the Angelus with those gathered in St. Peter's Square. Today marks the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The Holy Father affirmed that the Church has always been at the side of migrants and refugees, observing that its support reached "singular heights" at the beginning of the 20th century. In that regard, he mentioned St. Frances Cabrini (1850-1917), and Blessed Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini (1839-1905).

The Pontiff noted that his official message for today's world day celebration focused on young people who migrate or are displaced.

"Jesus Christ, who as a newborn lived through the dramatic experience of being a refugee because of Herod's threats, taught his disciples to welcome children with great respect and love," he reflected.

"The child too, in fact, whatever his nationality or the color of his skin, must first of all and always be considered a person, the image of God, to promote and protect against every marginalization and exploitation," Benedict XVI affirmed. "In particular, it is necessary to take every care that minors who live in a foreign country are protected by legislation and above all watched over in the countless problems that they must face.

"While I strongly encourage the Christian communities and organizations that are engaged in assisting young migrants and refugees, I exhort everyone to keep alive an educative and cultural sensitivity toward them, according to the authentic Gospel spirit."

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On ZENIT's Web page:

Full text: www.zenit.org/article-28070?l=english

On the Net:

Pope's message for World Day of Migrants and Travelers: www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091016_world-migrants-day_en.html