

WE ARE ONE FAMILY, SAYS BENEDICT XVI

Urges Charity and Hospitality for Migrants and Refugees

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 26, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- We are all part of one human family, with equal rights to share in the fruits of the earth, and with equal responsibility to be open and hospitable to migrants and refugees, says Benedict XVI.

The Pope said this in his message for the 97th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be observed next Jan. 16. The Pope chose "One Human Family" as the theme for the day as a way to underline "the profound link" that exists between all human beings.

He referred to all peoples as "one family of brothers and sisters in societies that are becoming ever more multiethnic and intercultural, where also people of various religions are urged to take part in dialogue, so that a serene and fruitful coexistence with respect for legitimate differences may be found."

The Holy Father said the world day offers the entire Church an opportunity to consider "the growing phenomenon of migration," and "to pray that hearts may open to Christian welcome and to the effort to increase in the world justice and charity, pillars on which to build an authentic and lasting peace."

"If the Father calls us to be beloved children in his dearly beloved Son, he also calls us to recognize each other as brothers and sisters in Christ," the Pontiff added.

"The road is the same, that of life, but the situations that we pass through on this route are different," the Pope said. "Many people have to face the difficult experience of migration in its various forms: internal or international, permanent or seasonal, economic or political, voluntary or forced."

But in the end, he underlined, all "belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded."

Rights and duties

Benedict XVI affirmed "the right to emigrate" that Pope John Paul II spoke of in 2001, on the occasion of the World Day for Migrants and Refugees. "The Church recognizes this right in every human person, in its dual aspect of the possibility to leave one's country and the possibility to enter another country to look for better conditions of life," the Polish Pope said on that occasion.

The Pontiff also noted the rights of states to regulate migration into their territories, and to defend their borders, as well as the duty of immigrants to respect the laws and identity of the receiving country.

"The challenge," said John Paul II, "is to combine the welcome due to every human being, especially when in need, with a reckoning of what is necessary for both the local inhabitants and the new arrivals to live a dignified and peaceful life."

Benedict XVI also pointed in particular to the situation of refugees and those "who flee from violence and persecution," and he called for "respect of their rights, as well as the legitimate concern for security and social coherence."

"Solidarity," he continued, "is nourished by the 'reserve' of love that is born from considering ourselves a single human family and, for the Catholic faithful, members of the Mystical Body of Christ."

The Pope added, "This means that those who are forced to leave their homes or their country will be helped to find a place where they may live in peace and safety, where they may work and take on the rights and duties that exist in the Country that welcomes them, contributing to the common good and without forgetting the religious dimension of life."

On the Net:

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