



ZE12102906 - 2012-10-29

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-35840?l=english>

Cardinal Veglio Presents Holy Father's Letter to Migrants and Refugees

Cites Church's Role in Emphasizing Human Dignity as Crucial

By Junno Arocho

VATICAN CITY, OCT. 29, 2012 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Cardinal Antonio Maria Veglio, president of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, presented Pope Benedict XVI's message for the 99th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated on January 13, 2013. The theme of the world day will be "Migrations: Pilgrimage of Faith and Hope."

Also present at the press conference were Archbishop Joseph Kalathiparambil, secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples and Fr. Federico Lombardi, director of the Holy See Press Office.

Cardinal Veglio cited the 2011 World Migration Report from the International Organization for Migration which estimated a total of 214 million international migrants. Calling the number of migrants as "striking", the cardinal also stated that another 740 million people must be added to that number.

"Adding the two figures together, we see that nearly one billion human beings, a seventh of the global population, is today experiencing some form of migration", Cardinal Veglio said.

"On their existential pilgrimage towards a better future, migrants carry with them feelings of faith and hope, even if they are not yet aware exactly what they are searching for. To say that they are trying only to improve their economic or social situation would be an over-simplification of the issue."

The Italian prelate said that in this context, the Church is called to show "maternal solicitude without distinction." Citing the Holy Father's message, Cardinal Veglio said that Pope Benedict identifies to channels of activity that, while not parallel, are complementary. On the one hand, he said "is the more tangible element which, we could say, is more easily identifiable by the mass media and takes form in 'the creation of programs aimed at meeting emergencies. The second

element, more laborious and less 'media friendly' because it often requires a change of mentality, is: supporting and accompanying the integration of migrants into their new socio-cultural surroundings".

While noting that the Pope's message comes not too long after his visit to the Middle East, Cardinal Veglio said that the presence of migrants, both Christian and believers of other religions, play a particular role in the Middle Eastern region. "The phenomenon of migration obliges us to encounter different lifestyles and different cultures, stimulating the creation of new relationships," he said.

Concluding his intervention, Cardinal Veglio stated that the Church's emphasis on the dignity of the human person plays a crucial role in the integration of migrants. "In her efforts to resolve the human, social and religious problems of emigration, the Church does not fail to give this increasingly significant phenomenon a distinctly humanist and Christian imprint," he said.

[Share on twitter](#) [Share on facebook](#) [Share on myspace](#) [Share on stumbleupon](#) [Share on digg](#) [Share on google](#) [Share on delicious](#) [Share on amenmee](#) [Share on favorites](#) [Share on print](#) | [More Sharing Services](#)[More](#)

© Innovative Media, Inc.

Reprinting ZENIT's articles requires written permission from the [editor](#).