

*You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently
than the natives born among you;
have the same love for him as for yourself;
for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.*
Lv 19:33-34

Opening Prayer

Blessed are those who are on the move,
transforming exodus and flight in energy for a new search.
For the victims will come the protagonists of history.

Blessed are those who, forced to wander without direction,
with wisdom learn and teach the lessons of the road.
They will be the architects of a new time.

Blessed are those who suffer pain, nostalgia and loneliness,
yet know how to make of every arrival a new beginning.
They shall act with faith, hope and life.

Blessed are those who open borders
and mix the anthems, flags, races and creeds.
Without discrimination, they make the world everyone's home

Blessed the wayfarers of all roads
in the tears, sweat and the work of their hands.
They prepare a tomorrow of justice and right.

Blessed are those who open the door to pilgrims,
making solidarity the passport to our common homeland.
They are constructing a new citizenship.

Blessed are those who foment encounters and re-encounters,
sowing peace.
They will harvest flowers and stars in the new heaven and the new earth.

Blessed are the excluded, without opportunities and without voice.
They will be the first guests in the great banquet,
where bread will not be lacking on anyone's table.

Reflection on the Catholic Social Teaching of the Dignity of the Human Person

Please respond, “Lord, hear our prayer.”

- For migrants, refugees, and strangers in our midst, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our public officials, that they may find ways to treat immigrants and refugees with justice, let us pray to the Lord.
- For our community, that we may come to greater understanding and acceptance of our differences, let us pray to the Lord.
- For migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, and all newcomers, that they may be welcomed in our communities, let us pray to the Lord.

Closing Prayer

Mother Cabrini, you came to America as a migrant, sent to care for those who had journeyed far from home.

We ask you to teach us to welcome newcomers to our land and to serve them with the same joy you embodied.

Beg Jesus, on our behalf, to give us the same gifts of faith, hope, and love that he brought to perfection in you.

We seek faith, that our trust in God will strengthen us to carry on the works of peace and justice.

We seek hope, that our confidence will shine as a beacon to those who flee to our land in despair.

We seek love, the perfect love which casts out all fear, that we may welcome strangers in our land with true peace and generosity of spirit.

Guide us on our own journey home to Jesus, that we may dwell in his love forever, praising God.

From USCCB Migration and Refugee Services, National Migration Week Prayer 2005.

Of all the CST, the idea of the life and dignity of the human person is the **most basic**.

In the **very beginning** of scripture we are told that we are created in the image and likeness of God.

From the beginning to end, the scripture tells us of the **inherent dignity we all share as creations of God**, created in God's image.

If this teaching is so obvious and is at the very heart of our tradition, ASK: **why then does the Church continue to present this theme as a social teaching?**

Is there a difference between God's will and the rules and customs created by humans?

From God's perspective, **religious and social norms are meant to enhance the life and dignity of the human person**.

Practices and structures that dehumanize are not from God but are the creation of humanity.

Sometimes these structures are called "social sin" – when the structures and norms of society do not enhance human dignity, but rather diminish it.

We often build social, political, and economic structures that are **so a part of our lives** that we are **not even conscious** of how they conflict with the heart of Jesus' message.

We need to be aware.

Thank you for being aware for being here to correct an unjust system and to restore dignity to immigrants living in our midst.

The Dignity of the Human Person Reflection Questions

How does our community enhance the life and dignity of human people, especially immigrants?

How do the social structures of our community/society diminish or destroy the life and dignity of human people, especially immigrants?

Share one wish you have that would allow immigrants in our community to be treated with greater dignity and respect.

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