

SALT & LIGHT

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NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK

Catholic Family Center invites the interfaith community to join us in celebrating a "Year of the Immigrant" beginning with National Migration Week, January 6-12 or at a time more suitable to one's own tradition, i.e. the Jewish feast of Passover. How can your faith community stand as a beacon of kindness and compassion in a time disdain for others who seem unlike ourselves? This year's theme, "Building Communities of Welcome" reminds us that each of our families have a migration story, some recent and others in the distant past. Regardless of where we are and where we came from, we remain part of the human family and are called to live in solidarity with one another. See <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/take-action/national-migration-week/>.



Migrants are the most traumatized of people, often living for decades in crowded refugee camps with few services having already experienced a difficult journey fraught with threats from opposing militias, human traffickers, hunger and violence. Fleeing one's home never to return is alone traumatizing.

How to do this in the midst of so many other demands for time and attention?

- Reference the trauma of today's migrants when preaching on Epiphany. The Magi's visit foreshadowed the flight into Egypt to protect the Christ Child's life. We don't have to be in agreement with political solutions to respond with compassion to the plight of those who cross borders in pursuit of safety or a better life for themselves and their children.
- Include a prayer for migrants in your petitions.
- Use the social media links in the USCCB packet to post information on your website and/or Facebook pages.
- Include a brief reflection or prayer for migrants in your bulletins, making the association with the Holy Family's trauma.

Later, consider some of these additional steps:

- Use these award-winning videos on social media or for a discussion starter: www.seetheirstories.org
- Hold an information session or panel. Catholic Family Center can provide speakers.
- Post a sign or banner that shows you are a welcoming community.
- Present on your tradition's teaching on welcoming strangers to your youth and adult groups.
- Write a letter to the editor.
- Volunteer to teach English to newcomers.
- Host a potluck with newcomers in your community to try new foods and encounter and learn about new cultures.
- Host a refugee experience event on your campus or in your local community
- Organize a walk or a similar community event to help raise awareness on migration issues.
- Volunteer to assist refugees or migrants.
- Participate in the community celebration of World Refugee Day, June 20 or Bienvenidas (welcomings) in Brockport or Sodus as migrant farmworkers arrive to harvest crops.
- For Catholics: Plan an event for the World Day of Refugees and Migrants, September 29, 2019

Immigrants who come to the United States, and particularly those who are undocumented, are a particularly vulnerable population who need someone to speak on behalf of their human rights and dignity. Our moral tradition calls on all people of faith and goodwill to stand up in defense of life and human dignity; it is a fundamental calling for people of faith. We must always behave towards others in a way that respects their human dignity.

"They are human people, I stress this, who are appealing for solidarity and assistance, who need urgent action but also and above all understanding and kindness. God is good, let us imitate God. Their condition cannot leave us indifferent. Moreover, as Church we should remember that in tending the wounds of refugees, evacuees and the victims of trafficking, we are putting into practice the commandment of love that Jesus bequeathed to us when he identified with the foreigner, with those who are suffering, with all the innocent victims of violence and exploitation

Pope Francis, (5/24/13)

DIOCESAN PUBLIC POLICY

Since the make-up of the New York State Legislature will shape new legislation, the Diocesan Public Policy Committee (DPPC) did not set its agenda until after the November elections. Since it is quite likely that the proposed bill to expand abortion rights, the "Reproductive Health Act", will be enacted in January, right after the Christmas holidays, the DPPC will ask parishes and individuals to support the work of the New York Catholic Conference in opposing the legislation. A bulletin flyer has been prepared for early January and parishes are encouraged to make the advocacy link available to parishioners on their social media platforms. Learn more at www.nyscatholic.org/2018/01/abortionexpansion/.

This year, during the weekend of Feb. 9-10, Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester will have the opportunity to speak up for farmworkers by petitioning their state elected officials to support the Farmworker Fair Labor Practices Act. This bill would end the exclusion of farmworkers from these basic rights and simply grant them equal treatment under our labor laws.

The two education issues will continue to be the Opioid Crisis and Sharing the Journey, this year with a focus on the U.S. Bishops new Pastoral Letter on Racism, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call To Love*.

Materials will begin to be posted on the diocesan website soon after Christmas. Watch www.dor.org/about/office-ministry-directory/catholic-charities/public-policy-committee/

WORLD DAY OF PEACE (JAN. 1)

Pope Francis' World Day of Peace message for 2019, entitled "Good Politics at the Service of Peace," is a call to political participation. He reminds us that the Gospel calls us to raise our voices for the common good, for "politics is one of the highest forms of charity." Advocating for and with communities who are oppressed, disadvantaged, or excluded is a response to our baptismal call to love all members of the Body of Christ, in imitation of Christ's love.

Find resources at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/world-day-of-peace.cfm

From the document:

"Peace, in effect, is the fruit of a great political project grounded in the mutual responsibility and interdependence of human beings. But it is also a challenge that demands to be taken up ever anew. It entails a conversion of heart and soul; it is both interior

and communal; and it has three inseparable aspects:

- peace with oneself, rejecting inflexibility, anger and impatience; in the words of Saint Francis de Sales, showing "a bit of sweetness towards oneself" in order to offer "a bit of sweetness to others";
- peace with others: family members, friends, strangers, the poor and the suffering, being unafraid to encounter them and listen to what they have to say;
- peace with all creation, rediscovering the grandeur of God's gift and our individual and shared responsibility as inhabitants of this world, citizens and builders of the future.

The politics of peace, conscious of and deeply concerned for every situation of human vulnerability, can always draw inspiration from the Magnificat, the hymn that Mary, the Mother of Christ the Saviour and Queen of Peace, sang in the name of all mankind: 'He has mercy on those who fear him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm; he has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly; ...for he has remembered his promise of mercy, the promise he made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever' (Lk 1:50-55)."

POVERTY AWARENESS MONTH

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development reminds us that January is Poverty Awareness Month. "As disciples of Christ, we are invited to encounter those in our communities who experience poverty. Poverty in the United States is a reality. We must work together to put faith in action to work towards policies in our local communities, and nationally, that can help address it."

-Bishop David P. Talley of Alexandria,
Chair of the USCCB Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Respond to Pope Francis' challenge to listen to the needs of and empower persons in poverty by participating in Poverty Awareness Month in January. An online and print calendar (also en Español) includes daily ways to learn about poverty, get inspired by how communities are responding, and take action with others.

In addition to the calendar are longer daily reflections (also en Español) and a pastoral aid for Sunday, January 27, 2019 (also en Español). You can also sign up to receive the daily reflections by email.

Find resources at <http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/poverty-education/poverty-awareness-month.cfm>