

God-with-us *Praying with Pope Benedict* *XVI for Migrant Children* *at Christmas Time*



“The migrant is a human person who possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Message for Migrant and Refugee Day, November, 2009

Note: Pope Benedict’s recently released Message for Migrant and Refugee Day focuses on the plight of migrant children around the world. While this day is officially celebrated on January 17, the Pope released his message before the Christmas holiday to remind Christians that the child Jesus was a refugee himself.

God, Creator of all peoples, help us remember, that as a child, your son Jesus Christ himself experienced migration; as the Gospel recounts, in order to flee the threats of Herod, he had to seek refuge in Egypt with Joseph and Mary soon after his birth.

May we celebrate this holy time of Christ’s birth by praying for the millions of children in our world whose lives are being shaped by migration and by flight from their home countries because of violence, war, poverty, and prejudice.

Creator God, help us to recognize that so many of these children have found “no room at the inn” and “no place to lay their heads.” These vulnerable children are “the least of these” that Jesus points us to when we wish to serve him; in their faces, may we see once again the Divine Child.

We pray:

For migrant and refugee children who are in camps or in environments where their basic need for safety, food, shelter and health care are not being met:

Lord have mercy.

For migrant and refugee children who lack access to adequate education:

Lord have mercy.

For migrant children who are forced to work in fields and factories:

Lord have mercy.

For migrant children who lack a positive social environment that supports their physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development:

Lord have mercy.

For migrant children born in a country different from their parents, and for those children who join their parents after sometimes long separation; these children must deal with the challenges of two cultures:

Lord have mercy.

For refugee children seeking asylum, fleeing their own country, where they are not given adequate protection:

Lord have mercy.

For these children, Jesus' words resound in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." May we remember that hospitality and solidarity to strangers, especially to children, become a proclamation of the Gospel of solidarity. May we have mercy on migrant and refugee children and take them to our hearts, especially during this season of Christ's birth. In Christ's, name we pray.

Amen.

"I would like to invite all Christians to become aware of the social and pastoral challenges posed by migrant and refugee minors."

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