



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This weekend, we observe the World Day for Migrants and Refugees. The Church calls us to pray, reflect, and act on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are compelled to leave their homelands in search of safety, peace, and hope. Their journeys are often marked by hardship, fear, and loss, yet they also bear profound witness to the resilience of the human spirit and the enduring hope rooted in God's promise.

Pope Leo XIV reminds us that "migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes."¹ These words invite us to see every migrant and refugee as a neighbor in need as well as a bearer of God's grace and a sign of His Kingdom.

Here in the United States, we continue to witness many families and individuals in our communities, who are seeking a better life because they were fleeing war, poverty, and violence. Once again, they find themselves facing uncertainty and fear. Behind the headlines and statistics are real people—mothers and fathers longing to provide for their children, young people yearning for security and opportunity, grandparents hoping simply to live out their remaining years in peace. Each person is a child of God, deserving of respect, compassion, and the chance to flourish. As the Church teaches, the dignity of the human person does not depend on legal status, nationality, or circumstance; it is inherent, given by our Creator.

Here in our own communities, we are not untouched by the realities of migration. Families arrive seeking work, protection, and opportunity, often carrying deep wounds of displacement. Our response as Catholics must always begin with the Gospel: to welcome the stranger, to safeguard the dignity of every person, and to build communities where all are treated as beloved children of God.

We cannot be indifferent or closed off to those who knock at our doors. Instead, we need to pray for migrants and refugees, advocate for just policies that safeguard them, and extend to them concrete acts of hospitality and care. In doing so, we respond to Christ Himself, who tells us: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35).

May the Virgin Mary, Comfort of Migrants, intercede for all those who journey in search of hope, and may our Diocese be a place of welcome and compassion, reflecting the heart of Christ to all.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg

¹ Leo, "Message of Pope Leo XIV for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2025," Vatican, <https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/migration/documents/20250725-world-migrants-day-2025.html> (accessed September 24, 2025).