

EMBRACED AND WELCOMED



Prayer guide for National Migration Week and the World Day of
Migrants and Refugees 2025

Catholic Charities- Social Concerns



“Attention must be called to the rights of migrants and their families and to respect for their human dignity, even in cases of non-legal immigration.”

- ***Pope John Paul II,***
Ecclesia in America

“Migrants and refugees should not be mistrusted or feared but embraced and welcomed.” -Archbishop Thompson, Peace & Unity Pastoral Reflection

“The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: ‘The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration which God has placed in the heart of every man and woman; it takes up the hopes that inspire human activities; (CCC 1818). What is more, the search for happiness, and the prospect of finding it beyond one’s place of origin, is certainly one of the main motivations for the movement of people today.”

-Message of Pope Leo XIV for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2025

As Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Indianapolis commemorates the annual celebration of National Migration Week and the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Catholic Charities-Social Concerns was inspired to create this guide for prayer, that all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Indianapolis might expand our hearts. Seeking to be more like our Lord Jesus Christ who had a special love for the marginalized, we hold in prayer those who hope for a better life, even as all of us, migrants or not, hope for a better world in which the dignity of each human person is respected.



Catholic Principles of Migration

Our approach to migration is rooted in the Gospel and centuries of Catholic Social Teaching traditions. One such document is [*Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*](#), a pastoral letter concerning migration from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States. Below are five principles, that guide the Church's approach to migration.

I. Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.

All persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In this context, work that provides a just, living wage is a basic human need.

II. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.

The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories and their borders. However, wealthier nations, which have the ability to better protect and feed their residents, have a strong obligation to accommodate migration flows.

III. Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.

The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work

elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right.

IV. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.

Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the global community. This requires, at a minimum, that migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims fully considered by a competent authority.

V. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Often they are subject to punitive laws and harsh treatment by enforcement officers from both receiving and transit countries. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.

The Church recognizes the right of a sovereign state to control its borders in furtherance of the common good. It also recognizes the right of human beings to migrate

so that they can realize their God-given rights. These teachings complement each other. While the sovereign state may impose reasonable limits on immigration, the common good is not served when the basic human rights of the individual are violated.



IMAGO DEI

“THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD”

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:27

“God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them.”

FOR REFLECTION

“The Church sees in men and women, in every person, the living image of God himself... In Christ the Lord, the Church indicates and strives to be the first to embark upon the path of the human person, and she invites all people to recognize in everyone- near and far, known and unknown, and above all in the poor and the suffering- a brother or sister “for whom Christ died.” - Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church paragraph 105

Scan here to listen to The Porter's Gate sing “He is Among Us”



PRAYER:

God of all life,
Help us to appreciate the great gift that is human life
formed in your image, a reflection of your holiness.
Help us to recognize you
in all whom you have created:
children not yet born,
families affected by poverty and war,
people of different abilities,
people from other lands, and
all who are victims of hatred and racism.
Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom
you have created,
regardless of stage of life,
or wealth,
or ability,
or color, or creed,
for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.
Share with us your holy knowledge
that we are all your children,
each bestowed with inherent dignity.
May your justice reign forever!
Amen.

USCCB Life and Dignity of the Human Person Prayer

When is it easy for me to see the image and likeness of God in others? When is it difficult? Who is included in my image of God? Who is not? Do I speak about others, especially those with whom I disagree, as if they are a 'brother or sister for whom Christ died?'

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



“ROUGHLY ONE IN FIVE CATHOLICS

*IN THE UNITED
STATES ARE
VULNERABLE TO
DEPORTATION OR
LIVE WITH A FAMILY
MEMBER WHO COULD
BE DEPORTED”.*

*-from the report: One Part of the Body, The Potential Impact of
Deportations on American Christian Families*



IMAGINATIVE PRAYER

CONTEMPLATION

As we pray with the following 4 texts, we'll pray in the style of imaginative prayer. Use the following steps during each time of prayer:

1. Quiet your mind and heart by taking a few deep breaths and recalling that you are in the presence of God. Ask the Lord to bless this time of prayer and guide your thoughts and heart during this time.
2. Read the passage slowly all the way through 2-3 times; well enough that you could tell the story to someone else.
3. Put the text down and close your eyes. Imagine the scene vividly in your mind- like you are watching a movie. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you use your 5 senses to explore the story. What do you see- is it day or night? Is the story in the countryside, the city, etc. Who are the people in the story? What do they look like? What do you hear? Is there background noise? Are there birds chirping? Other people talking? Trees rustling in the breeze? What do you smell? Is there smoke or incense? Fragrant oil? A feast with lots of delicious smelling foods? What do you feel? Is it warm or chilly? Anything you can taste?
4. After you have constructed this scene in your mind, put yourself in the scene. Are you one of the main characters? Which one? An observer or bystander? Are you close to the action or watching from afar?
5. Watch the story unfold with you as a character. Participate in the scene and notice where the Holy Spirit nudges you to pay attention.
6. When you come to the end of the story, talk to the Lord about what happened in the prayer, and any insights that you noticed or questions that you have about your experience. Then come to a place of stillness and invite the Lord to respond to your heart.
7. Thank the Lord for this time of prayer, and close with the Our Father.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 16: 19-31

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead?’”

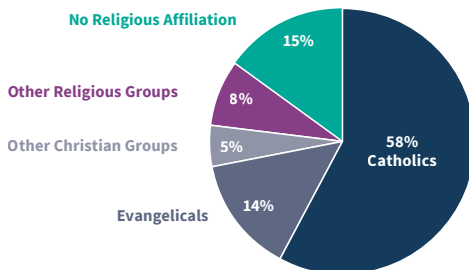


Which character in the parable do I most identify with? Why? As I imagined the scene, can I imagine myself as another character?

How does this change my understanding of the parable? Set against a backdrop of migration, what does this parable say to me? Is the Lord inviting me to conversion? Repentance? Action?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM *Religious affiliation of
asylum seekers in the U.S.*



Note: Estimates are as of the end of 2024. Religious affiliation is largely based on self-reporting in global census and survey data. See methodology for more information.

Source: World Christian Database estimates, based on demographic data from FWD.us as derived from the 2023 American Community Survey, and other global census and survey data, and data from religious communities.

*-from the report: One Part of the Body, The Potential Impact of
Deportations on American Christian Families*

“

THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM MUST
NEVER BE DENIED WHEN PEOPLE'S
LIVES ARE TRULY THREATENED IN
THEIR HOMELAND.

-POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

”

SCRIPTURE

Luke 10: 29-37

“But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.



A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.

He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.

The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’

Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?”

He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

How do I answer the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?"

How do I answer Jesus' question, "which of these three was neighbor?" Do my thoughts, words, and actions indicate that I am a neighbor to people who are victims in my community, country, or the world? What is the "good news" in this gospel passage?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 14:7-14

“[Jesus] told a parable to those who had been invited, noticing how they were choosing the places of honor at the table.

“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not recline at table in the place of honor. A more distinguished guest than you may have been invited by him, and the host who invited both of you may approach you and say, ‘Give your place to this man,’ and then you would proceed with embarrassment to take the lowest place. Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, ‘My friend, move up to a higher position.’ Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table.

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Then he said to the host who invited him, “When you hold a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors, in case they may invite you back and you have repayment.

Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”



Through my experience of imaginative prayer, what image stands out to me from this passage? What emotions are evoked as I reflect on that image? What does this text teach me about God's character? What is God's invitation to me as I read?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines, typical of notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER

Father, you entrusted to Saint Joseph what you held most precious: the child Jesus and his Mother, in order to protect them from the dangers and threats of the wicked.

Grant that we may experience his protection and help. May he, who shared in the sufferings of those who flee from the hatred of the powerful, console and protect all our brothers and sisters driven by war, poverty and necessity to leave their homes and their lands to set out as refugees for safer places.

Help them, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, to find the strength to persevere, give them comfort in sorrows and courage amid their trials.

Grant to those who welcome them some of the tender love of this just and wise father, who loved Jesus as a true son and sustained Mary at every step of the way.

May he, who earned his bread by the work of his hands, watch over those who have seen everything in life taken away and obtain for them the dignity of a job and the serenity of a home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, whom Saint Joseph saved by fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whom he loved as a faithful husband in accordance with your will. Amen.

Pope Francis, Saint John Lateran, May 13, 2020, Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima



STORY

<https://clinic.shorthandstories.com/a-dream-uncaged-part-one/>



SCAN HERE

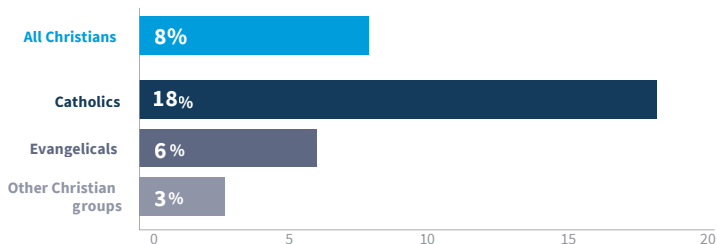
Using the imaginative prayer steps from the past three days, today we will do something a bit different. We invite you to follow the QR code or the link at the top of the page to read “A Dream Uncaged,” the story of Jessica Molina*, aged 14, from Nicaragua as told to Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. staff. Compose the scene as you would do with scripture, and again, speak to the Lord about your thoughts, feelings, fears, hopes, and convictions.

**Name changed to protect privacy*

What surprised me as I read Jessica's story? What is the Lord saying to me as I pray? Where do I see hope in her story? Do the inspirations of the Holy Spirit during my prayer with the Good Samaritan story, Lazarus and the Rich Man, and the Wedding Banquet inform my response to Jessica as an individual or migrants as a whole?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

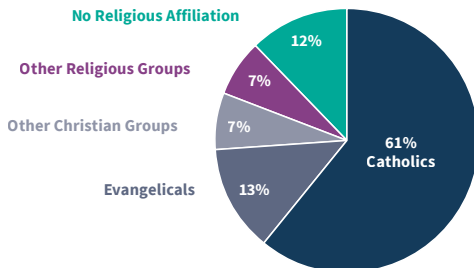
SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA WOULD BE IMPACTED BY DEPORTATIONS OF ALL THOSE AT RISK % of U.S. Christian groups who are vulnerable to deportation or live with someone who could be deported



Note: Estimates are as of the end of 2024 and include non-citizens without permanent residency or a temporary nonimmigrant visa as well as household members living with them regardless of their place of birth or immigration status. Religious affiliation is largely based on self-reporting in global census and survey data. See methodology for more information.

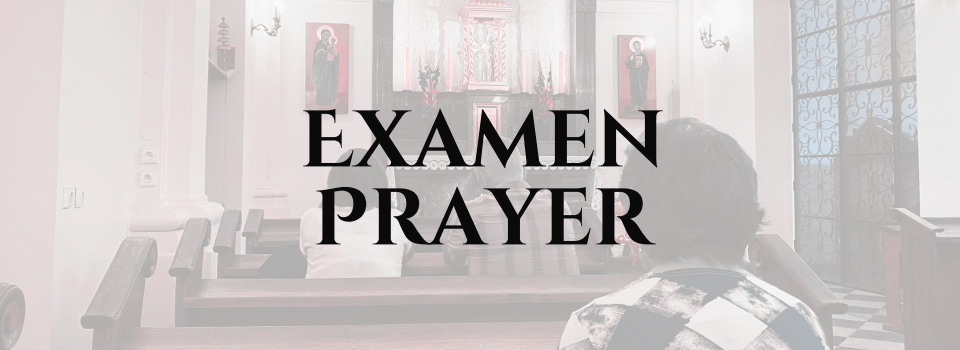
Source: World Christian Database estimates, based on demographic data from FWD.us as derived from the 2023 American Community Survey, and other global census, religious communities, and survey data.

THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF IMMIGRANTS AT RISK OF DEPORTATION ARE CHRISTIANS
Religious affiliation of the non-citizen population without legal status or with temporary legal protections in the U.S.



Note: Estimates are as of the end of 2024 and include non-citizens without permanent residency or a temporary nonimmigrant visa. Religious affiliation is largely based on self-reporting in global census and survey data. See methodology for more information.

Source: World Christian Database estimates, based on demographic data from FWD.us as derived from the 2023 American Community Survey, and other global census, religious communities, and survey data.



EXAMEN PRAYER

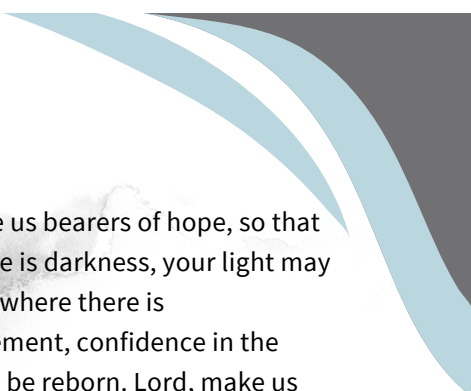
ABOUT

The Examen prayer, which is an adaptation of a technique used by St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises*, is a way of prayer that helps us to notice when and where the Lord is speaking and working in our life. It is often prayed in the evenings, as it helps us to reflect on our day, bringing us into the presence of God. The Examen is an invitation to bring greater awareness to where the Lord is calling us to follow him. It is not an examination of conscience, but rather a way to examine the whole of our lives- good and bad, and notice what brings us closer to God, and what makes us feel distant. We can use this type of prayer each day going forward for as long as the Lord calls us to reflect on our lives at present and whether we are striving for the Kingdom,

STEPS

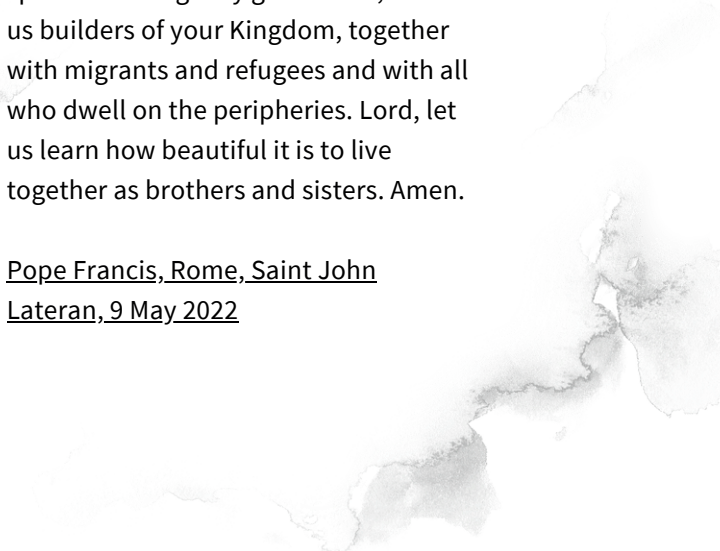
1. Place yourself in the presence of God. Bring your awareness to the reality that the Lord is here, and has taken the initiative to call you to this time of prayer. Take 3-5 deep breaths, inviting the Holy Spirit to be with you in this time of prayer.
2. What are you grateful for today? Bring to mind some specific instances that inspire gratitude, even if they are subtle. Everything is a gift. Spend some time speaking with the Lord, thanking him for these gifts.
3. Imagine you are watching a movie of your life for the past day. What stands out to you? How does watching this “movie of your life” make you feel? Which parts give you life and energy? Which parts inspire you to glorify God? In which instances do you notice dimness or darkness? Which make you feel convicted? Upset? Troubled?
4. Talk to the Lord about what has come to mind. Speak to God as one friend speaks to another, making sure to leave room for his response. What action does the Lord nudge you to take? Which patterns of thinking does he ask me to change?
5. Close by thanking the Lord for this time of prayer.

P R A Y E R



Lord, make us bearers of hope, so that where there is darkness, your light may shine, and where there is discouragement, confidence in the future may be reborn. Lord, make us instruments of your justice, so that where there is exclusion, fraternity may flourish, and where there is greed, a spirit of sharing may grow. Lord, make us builders of your Kingdom, together with migrants and refugees and with all who dwell on the peripheries. Lord, let us learn how beautiful it is to live together as brothers and sisters. Amen.

Pope Francis, Rome, Saint John
Lateran, 9 May 2022



TO EXPLORE FURTHER:



Scan here to see this prayer guide as a printable PDF with clickable links.

The sources used to create this prayer guide are included in the following list. Also included is more information that may be of interest for those looking for a more in depth study of the topics.

Message of the Holy Father for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees

Pope Leo XIV

Peace & Unity: A Pastoral Reflection by Archbishop Charles C. Thompson

The Holy Bible

An online version from the USCCB for your reference

Neighbors, not Strangers

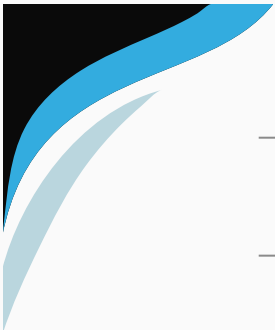
A storytelling project by [the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.](#)

Justice for Immigrants Campaign

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship

Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis



Immigration

Information on the topic from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Strangers No Longer; Together on the Journey of Hope

Joint statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (the Mexican Bishops' Conference) issued in 2003.

Ecclesia in America

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation by Pope St. John Paul II; chapter 5 discusses "the question of immigrants"

One Part of the Body: the Potential Impact of Deportations on American Christian Families

This report addresses the profound impact that mass deportations could have on Christian families and congregations across the United States if carried out in the way some policymakers have proposed. It was jointly issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Department of Migration and Refugee Services, the National Association of Evangelicals, World Relief, and the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Published March 2025

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

The systematic compilation the Church's Social Doctrine which concerns our life in society by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

Erga migrantes caritas Christi (the love of Christ towards migrants)

from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, 2004

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity

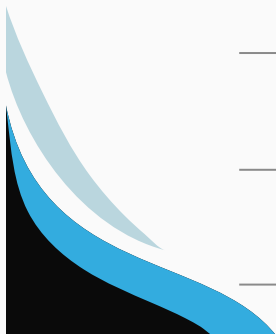
Issued by NCCB/USCC, November 15, 2000

Catechism of the Catholic Church

See paragraphs 2234-2246

Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Migrants and Refugees section





Thank you for praying with us!



Catholic Charities
Social Concerns



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<https://www.archindy.org/socialconcerns>