

**Mission for Migrants**  
**April 1, 2014**  
**Top Five Reasons People Migrate**

For decades Catholic Relief Services has worked in Mexico and Central America promoting development programs and human dignity. About 80 percent of the undocumented immigrants in the United States come from there. Through its work on the ground, CRS has identified the realities that compel people to migrate.

Top five reasons why people migrate:

1. Extreme poverty - The average minimum wage in El Salvador is [about \\$200](#) a month, but to feed a family of four costs at least \$275.
2. Unemployment and underemployment – Unemployment rates in Central America [are typically higher](#) than those in the United States. At the same time, market policies have increased [underemployment, inequality and poverty](#) in the region.
3. Ruthless violence – According to the United Nations, Latin America remains [the most unequal and most insecure region](#) in the world. Fear of violence has caused an estimated doubling of the number of unaccompanied minors entering the United States from Central America and México in [2011 and 2012](#).
4. Family reunification – The [backlog in the United States' reunification applications](#) results in long waiting periods between the time that a petition is approved and the time that a visa may be issued. That wait may be decades long.
5. Displacement after natural disasters – Latin America is [an extremely disaster-prone region](#). Floods, hurricanes and earthquakes erode the resilience of communities, forcing residents to leave.

Pope Francis denounced the indifference towards the suffering of immigrants, saying “we have fallen into a globalization of indifference” in which “we are accustomed to the suffering of others, it doesn't concern us, it's none of our business.”

Based on experience in the field and following Pope Francis call to not be indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters, CRS asks the United States Congress to reform our broken immigration system and to recognize the issues that drive migration.

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*Catholic Relief Services is the official international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States. The agency alleviates suffering and provides assistance to people in need in 91 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. For more information, please visit [www.crs.org](http://www.crs.org) or [www.crsespanol.org](http://www.crsespanol.org).*