

Mission for Migrants
April 1, 2014
Facts on Lampedusa and Pope Francis on Migrants

- On July 8, 2013, Pope Francis visited Lampedusa, his first pastoral visit outside Rome. He presided over a Mass for migrants, condemning the "global indifference" to their plight and threw a wreath in the sea in memory of the nearly 20,000 who have perished trying to reach Europe.
- Lampedusa is a small island located off the coast of Italy, which has become a port of entry for tens of thousands of migrants from North Africa who risk their lives crossing by sea in overcrowded small boats.
- The day before Pope Francis arrived to Lampedusa, the coastguard rescued 120 migrants including children, from the waters, after their boat broke down a few miles from the coast.
- In October 2013, just a few months after Pope Francis visited the island, another boat heading to Lampedusa capsized, killing 339 migrants.
- “These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God!” (*Homily, Visit to Lampedusa*)
- “In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!” (*Homily, Visit to Lampedusa*)
- “From the Christian standpoint, the reality of migration, like other human realities, points to the tension between the beauty of creation, marked by Grace and the Redemption, and the mystery of sin. Solidarity, acceptance, and signs of fraternity and understanding exist side by side with rejection, discrimination, trafficking and exploitation, suffering and death. Particularly disturbing are those situations where migration is not only involuntary, but actually set in motion by various forms of human trafficking and enslavement.” (Pope Francis’ message: ‘*Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World*’)
- “As the Church accompanies migrants and refugees on their journey, she seeks to understand the causes of migration, but she also works to overcome its negative effects, and to maximize its positive influence on the communities of origin, transit and destination.” (Pope Francis’ message: ‘*Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World*’)

(Source: Vatican Radio, *Vatican.va*)

Text of Homily from the visit to Lampedusa available at:

www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa_en.html

Text of Pope Francis’ message: “*Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World*” available at:

www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day_en.html