

# Resources for Promoting Unity in Diversity

**Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity**  
Pastoral statement: English No. 5-375, 64 pp.; Spanish  
No. 5-848, 72 pp. (est.)

**Called to Welcome the Stranger Among Us**  
Brochure: English No. 5-404; Spanish No. 5-849

**Who Are My Brothers and Sisters?**  
—*A Catholic Educational Guide for Understanding  
and Welcoming Immigrants and Refugees* No. 5-006,  
280 pp.  
—*Reflections for Understanding and Welcoming  
Immigrants and Refugees* No. 5-057, 64 pp.  
—*Videotape: Understanding Immigrants and Refugees*  
No. 5-053, 27 minutes

To order these resources or to obtain a catalog of other  
USCC titles, call toll-free 1-800-235-8722. In the  
Washington metropolitan area or from outside the  
United States, call 202-722-8716. Visit the bishops'  
Internet site located at [www.nccbuscc.org](http://www.nccbuscc.org).

## **Many Faces in God's House: A Catholic Vision for the Third Millennium**

A parish guide to help implement multicultural ministry.  
English/Spanish, 32pp.

To order this resource, please call the USCC Secretariat  
for Hispanic Affairs at 202-541-3150.

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# Called to

## Welcome the Stranger Among Us



## Unity in Diversity

*“Come, you who are blessed by my  
Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for  
you from the foundation of the world.  
For I was . . . a stranger and you  
welcomed me.”*

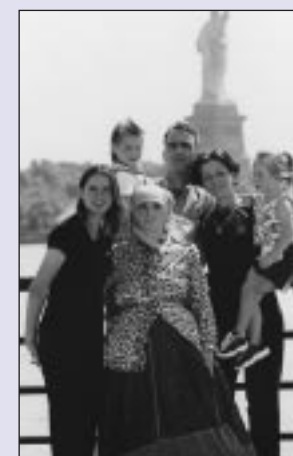
(Mt 25:34-35)

## We Are Called

*You shall treat the alien who resides with you no  
differently than the natives born among you; have  
the same love for him as for yourself; for you too  
were once aliens in the Land of Egypt. (Lv 19:34)*

The Word of God depicts poignant images of  
Moses and the Jewish people fleeing Egypt  
and of the Holy Family as refugees. These  
images call us to a deep compassion for the  
plight of the migrant. Inspired by this calling of  
our faith, the Church has developed a rich her-  
itage of welcome and pastoral concern for immi-  
grants, migrants, and refugees. This calling and  
this tradition have been well developed in the  
United States—a land of immigrants, a place  
heralded as a refuge for those fleeing persecution  
and seeking a better life.

The rich experience of immigration to the United  
States provides us with an opportunity to practice  
what we profess as a Christian people—to reach  
out to someone in need, to provide a genuine wel-  
come; and in doing so to become profoundly  
enriched ourselves.



AS CATHOLICS, WE ARE  
CALLED TO WELCOME  
NEW IMMIGRANTS AND  
HELP THEM JOIN OUR  
COMMUNITIES IN WAYS  
THAT ARE RESPECTFUL  
OF THEIR CULTURES  
AND IN WAYS THAT  
MUTUALLY ENRICH THE  
IMMIGRANTS AND THE  
RECEIVING CHURCH.

To pursue a vision of **unity in diversity**, we have  
chosen the way called for by Pope John Paul II  
in *The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)*:  
“‘The encounter with the living Jesus Christ’ is  
‘the path to conversion, communion and soli-  
darity’” (no. 7).

A TRUE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST LEADS TO A  
DAILY VISION OF THE RISEN LORD, PRESENT AND  
ACTIVE IN THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY IN THE POOR, IN  
THE STRANGER, AND IN THE MIGRANT AND REFUGEE.

## The Call to Conversion

The presence of so many people from such  
diverse cultures and backgrounds in the  
United States invites us as Church to a profound  
**conversion** so that we can truly become a sacra-  
ment of unity.

- **WE ARE CALLED** to move beyond the anti-  
immigrant stance that has become popular in  
different parts of our country, and the nativism  
and racism that continue to reassert themselves  
in our communities.
- **WE ARE CALLED** to reach out to ethnic com-  
munities that exist side by side in our parishes  
with little connection to one another.
- **WE ARE CALLED** to become an evangelizing  
Church—open to interfaith dialogue, recogniz-  
ing that the “missions” are at our doorstep.

The new immigrants call us back to our ances-  
tral heritage as descendants of immigrants and  
to our baptismal heritage as members of the  
body of Christ.

## The Call to Communion

Immigrants, new to our shores, draw us out of our unawareness to a conversion of mind and heart through which we are able to offer a genuine and suitable welcome, to share together as brothers and sisters at the same table, and to work side by side to improve the quality of life for society's most vulnerable members. In so doing, we work to bring all the children of God into a fuller **communion**.

*For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:13)*

The call to communion speaks to all members of the Church and asks that we prepare ourselves to receive the newcomers with a genuine spirit of welcome. Simple, grace-filled outreach to newcomers on the part of all members of the Church community is a first step that needs to be accompanied by constant and patient efforts at intercultural communication.

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“WE OFTEN FEEL ISOLATED, MARGINALIZED. WE DO NOT NECESSARILY EXPECT THE CHURCH TO KNOW OUR LANGUAGE, CULTURE, OR HISTORY, BUT WE DO WANT TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED, RESPECTED, AND VALUED.”

“WE EXPERIENCE THE MASS IN THE UNITED STATES AS FAST AND COLD.”

—NEWLY ARRIVED HAITIAN PARISHIONERS AT THE SHRINE OF THE SACRED HEART IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

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## The Call to Solidarity

The call to **solidarity** with immigrants, migrants, refugees, and all diverse peoples in our midst is the fruit of conversion and communion in Christ. It is well summarized by Pope John Paul II in his Message for World Migration Day 2000:

The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness. (no. 6)

## Expressing Solidarity with Immigrants and Refugees

### Advocating for Justice

The Church teaches us that “as Catholics, we need to share our values, raise our voices, and use our votes to shape a society that protects human life, promotes family life, pursues social justice, and practices solidarity” (Administrative Board of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium*, p. 12). In accordance with Catholic social teaching, and with the gospel mandate to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, the Catholic Church commits itself to advocacy on behalf of immigrants, migrants, and refugees:

- **WE ADVOCATE** for just policies that respect the human rights of immigrants and preserve the unity of the immigrant family, including

due process rights, fair naturalization procedures, and legalization opportunities. We advocate for generous refugee policies that provide protection for those fleeing persecution.

- **WE ENCOURAGE** the extension of social services, citizenship classes, and community organizing efforts that secure improved housing conditions, decent wages, better medical attention, and enhanced educational opportunities for immigrants, migrants, and refugees.
- **WE OPPOSE** efforts to stem migration that do not effectively address its root causes and that permit the continuation of the political, social, and economic inequities that contribute to it.

### How Can You Get Involved in Advocacy Efforts?

- **AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**, call your diocesan or parish coordinator for ethnic ministries, refugee resettlement, social action, or peace and justice to learn about activities and advocacy related to immigration and refugee issues.
- **CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE** of the U.S. bishops' Migration and Refugee Services for action alerts, updates, and background information on current policy issues at [www.nccbuscc.org/mrs](http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs). Call 202-541-3208 or e-mail [mrspol@nccbuscc.org](mailto:mrspol@nccbuscc.org) to be added to the advocacy mailing list.

### Reflections on Your Local Pastoral Response

At the parish and diocesan levels, how does your local church community celebrate the gift of different cultures to the Church? Does your local church . . .

- **WELCOME** all newcomers to your community?
- **HOST** well-prepared multicultural liturgies and social gatherings?
- **PROVIDE** inclusive lay leadership development programs?
- **APPOINT** prepared leaders of immigrant communities to parish and diocesan positions?
- **INITIATE** special efforts to help immigrant youth find their way as they experience themselves torn between two cultures?

On a personal level, how do you promote the unity of Christ amongst the diversity of people in your community?

- **HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO NEWCOMERS** in your community?
- **DO YOU RESPECTFULLY CHALLENGE** people when you hear them making anti-immigrant statements?
- **DO YOU CONTRIBUTE** to volunteer or charitable work that supports immigrants, migrants, and refugees in your local community?

How can you enhance our personal and community efforts to promote unity in diversity?

- **FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION**, resource directories, and materials, contact the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees: 202-541-3230, or [www.nccbuscc.org/mrs/pcmr](http://www.nccbuscc.org/mrs/pcmr).