

SHARE *the Journey*

PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

HEAR US, O GOD

*"Know that the LORD is God,
he made us, we belong to him,
we are his people, the flock he shepherds."
- Psalm 100:3*

Hear us, O God. Hear our families of mixed status. Hear those who wait in fear of separation, burdened with anxiety.

Hear us, O God. Hear all who are called "foreigner." Hear us when we experience cold stares or mistrust because of the color of our skin or the language we speak.

Hear us, O God. Hear our brothers and sisters who sweat in the fields. Hear those who work long, backbreaking hours growing food, serving us at restaurants, and cleaning our homes.

Hear us, O God. Hear those young people who were brought to this country as children. Hear their dreams for a future of hope.

Hear us, O God. Hear vulnerable women and children. Hear those who have fled domestic violence, rape, or gangs to seek safety in this country.

Hear us, O God. Hear those who work in the shadows and are exposed to exploitation and harassment. Hear those for whom just pay for a just day's work is always uncertain.

Hear us, O God. Hear us as we raise our voices. Hear your people as we seek laws and policies to protect the vulnerable and welcome the stranger.

Standing together—a single yet diverse body of Christ, we pray: *Shepherd of the flock, hear us.* Be with us, restore us, and strengthen us, for we belong to you.

May your kingdom come and your will be done. *Amen.*

BIBLE SPOTLIGHT BIBLICAL VISION OF LOVE FOR STRANGERS

by Fr. Thomas Betz, OFC

Both the Old and New Testaments tell compelling stories of refugees forced to flee because of oppression. Exodus tells the story of the Chosen People, Israel, who were victims of bitter slavery in Egypt. They were utterly helpless by themselves, but with God's powerful intervention they were able to escape and

take refuge in the desert. For forty years they lived as wanderers with no homeland of their own. Finally, God fulfilled his ancient promise and settled them on the land that they could finally call home.

The Israelites' experience of living as homeless aliens was so painful and frightening that God ordered his people for all time to have special care for the alien: "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 19:33-34).

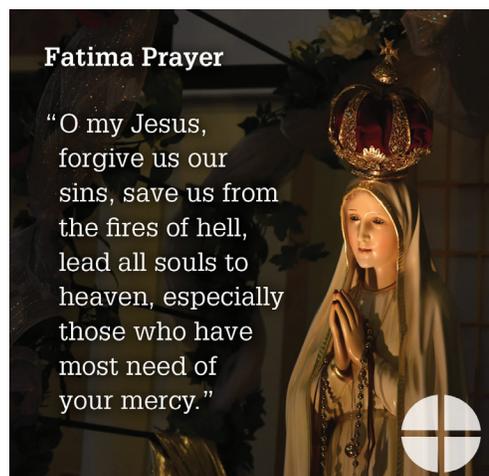
The New Testament begins with Matthew's story of Joseph and Mary's escape to Egypt with their newborn son, Jesus, because the paranoid and jealous King Herod wanted to kill the infant. Our Savior himself lived as a refugee because his own land was not safe.

Jesus reiterates the Old Testament command to love and care for the stranger, a criterion by which we shall be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35).

The Apostle Paul asserts the absolute equality of all people before God: "There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). In Christ, the human race is one before God, equal in dignity and rights.



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Fatima Prayer

"O my Jesus,
forgive us our
sins, save us from
the fires of hell,
lead all souls to
heaven, especially
those who have
most need of
your mercy."