

CHAPTER SIX

PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND TRAVELERS' PRESENCE IN THE USA AND IN THE CHURCH

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Provenance and History:

The diversity of the Church in the United States is reflected in the array of immigrant communities, ethnic groups and peoples on the move served by the USCCB office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT). Presently, PCMRT serves and coordinates the evangelization of ten major immigrant groups: (a) African, (b) Caribbean, (c) Brazilian, (d) European, (e) Mayan communities; and people on the move consisting of (f) Migrant Farm workers, (g) Seafarers/merchant mariners (h) Airport & Airline Workers and Travelers, (i) Circus and Traveling Show Ministries, and (j) Apostolate of the Road. These diverse groups bring both gifts and challenges to the Church.

Demographics and Context:

AFRICAN

An estimated 2.5 - 3 million African-born persons currently reside in the United States. This number excludes their American-born children. According to the US Census Bureau, African born population has grown rapidly in the past two decades; increasing by 142% from 1990-2000. More are settling permanently and raising families in the US. The 2002 US census reports that besides Egypt (108, 3710), Morocco (34, 680), and Sudan (19,790) most come from sub-Saharan Africa; West Africa (357, 360), East Africa (263, 415), Southern Africa (71, 883) and middle Africa (26, 900), and are located mostly in large metropolitan areas across the United States. This number is on the increase. Portuguese speaking immigrants from Cape Verde number about 250,000, and normally mingle with Brazilian and Portuguese communities. They are located mainly in the New England area especially in Massachusetts. About a third of African born population is Catholic with a Latin rite majority, followed by Ge'ez rite (Ethiopia and Eritrea) and some Coptic rite (Egyptians). The major pastoral languages for the African born are English and French.

Pastoral care of Africans is generally coordinated through arch/diocesan pastoral offices. Some communities have their own chaplains. Where such services are lacking, they try to blend into the local communities; often participating at the margins. The national office provides direct ministry to these communities through workshops, seminars, Eucharistic Congress, and through grants for the celebration of cultural events. The national office organizes think tank sessions for community leaders, and develops local and national groups such as National Association of African Catholics in the United States (NAACUS). These groups serve as support base for the communities. In 2006, the First National Eucharistic Congress was held at the Basilica of

Immaculate Conception in Washington DC, along with the conference of African priests and religious.

Beginning in the mid-1980s, a growing number of African priests (about 600) and religious (about 800) serve in various ministries and in different capacities throughout the US. Although they are caregivers, they are also recipients of care especially in acculturation to local culture, ecclesiology and local pastoral practices. These needs are met through workshops, seminars and conferences. Since 2000 a joint Conference of African Priests and Religious (ACCCRUS) has been held annually, with its 11th conference scheduled for Notre Dame in the summer of 2010.

CARIBBEAN:

The Caribbean Population in the United States is estimated at 3 million. Four countries – Dominican Republic (297,235), Cuba (229,140), Jamaica (174,360) and Haiti (164,180) had the largest arrivals between 1990 and 2000; an overall increase of 53% during this period. Majority are Catholics. About 83% reside in Florida, New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Spanish speaking Caribbean born from Cuba and the Dominican Republic are often served through Hispanic ministries in their dioceses and parishes.

Those from Jamaica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados gather at parish communities that are sensitive to their particular spiritual traditions and help them with their social and material needs. National organizations such as English speaking Caribbean Catholics of North America (CCNA) work with PCMRT to facilitate pastoral care to English speaking Caribbean born immigrants. The Haitians form a unique language group, of which about 65% of the population is Catholic. They are well organized and served through diocesan and parish structures in collaboration with the National Center for Haitian Apostolate. Ministry includes annual conventions with focus on a particular theme and/or particular group within the community. Arch/dioceses with large concentrations of Haitians have many parishes where the primary pastoral language is Haitian Creole – Brooklyn (16 parishes), Miami (9), Boston (8), and Newark (6). Collectively, they serve about 250,000 Catholics.

EUROPEAN

We generally do not think of European immigrants at the turn of the 21st century. The 2000 US census reports 4.9 million European immigrants in the United States, an increase of 13% from 1990. Eastern European-born immigrants (1,906,157) represent the largest with immigrants hailing from Poland (466,742), Russia (340,177), and Ukraine (275,153), Lithuania (125,000), Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech (50,000), Hungary. Other major Europeans-born populations include Germany (706,704), France (151,154), the United Kingdom (677,751), Ireland (156,474), Italy (473,338), Portugal (203,119), and Greece (165,750). They are generally older, with an average age about 50 years. As a group, Eastern European-born immigrants tend to be younger than other European- born immigrants.

The majority of European immigrants are Catholic. The Irish born for example are about 90% Catholic. With the exception of East European immigrants, they are more likely to blend in

with the local church than other immigrants. Some communities are ministered through cultural centers. The Hungarians for example have 29 centers throughout the US. Irish Catholic pastoral centers are in Boston, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington DC; and apostolate outreach centers are in Milwaukee, Ocean City (Maryland), San Diego, and Seattle.

BRAZILIAN

Brazilians and Mayans are the largest non-Spanish speaking Latin American communities in the US and the majority of which are Catholic. Massachusetts has the largest concentration of Brazilians. The 2006 US Census Bureau reported the Brazilian population at 345, 535. Approximately 65% are Catholic (Brazilian Apostolate Annual Report 2006). The New England region registers 31 Brazilian Catholic communities; the mid-Atlantic region (New York/New Jersey/Philadelphia/Washington DC) has 15 and South Florida 15 Catholic communities. The first wave of Brazilian immigrants arrived in the USA in the mid-1980 due to economic situations in the homeland. They viewed their situations as temporal but then a majority stayed for good in the USA.^a

MAYAN

About 150,000 Mayan Catholics originally from Guatemala are present in 30 dioceses in the USA. The majority of the Mayans live in Los Angeles, CA; Mesa, AZ; Homestead and Indiantown, FL.^b Pastoral outreach to the Mayan communities is achieved together with the “Maya Project” which emphasizes Maya lay Catholic pastoral leadership formation, development of national level communication linkages via a web site, initiation of a national and local level Maya youth ministry and the transmission of Maya Catholic values and cultural traditions among families, especially children. The partnership between the “Maya Project” and PCMRT and Kennesaw State University’s Maya Heritage Community Project has provided education for the Maya communities including human rights and legal rights issues. In all, about 40 Mayan communities are served through this partnership.

Gifts They Bring:

Gifts include a growing number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life and lay leadership, strong family values, pro-life culture, lively liturgy, rich faith traditions and popular devotions. They “shape the face of the entire church today” (USCCB Pastoral Plan). Additional gifts include core values – young hardworking “work force,” human warmth, the gift of improvisation.

Challenges:

Challenges include identity and how to live bi-culturally in the new society, alienation and a feeling of marginalization that leads to vulnerability and proselytization by other denominations and sects, parents’ loss of control of their Americanized children for fear that “discipline” will lead to sanction & deportation and lack of resources for outreach programs.

Some groups lack priests from their own cultural background or priests acquainted with their language and culture. They rely on occasional visits by priests and bishops from their background to serve as bridge between them and dioceses.

Second and third generation immigrants are more and more secularized. There is a fear of immigration enforcement and worksite raids. There is also difficulty associated with obtaining a driver's license which results in an inability to drive and from place of work, which then often leads to job loss of job. Other challenges include language barriers and downward occupational status (immigrants have to take menial jobs, whereas in their home country they could have professional jobs^c).

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE SEAFARERS/MARINERS

Provenance and History:

Ninety percent of the world's goods are transported by the waterways around the world. Seafarers are the men and women who work on cargo ships bringing in food, electronics, garments, apparels, cars, oil and many other products. The United States is a major calling port for these seafarers.

There are 69,000 US merchant mariners. Of the 1.2 million seafarers worldwide, one out of five is Filipino. In 2004, about 149, 327 foreign seafarers from 123 different countries on ships docked in US seaports; majority of foreign seafarers are Filipinos at 36.6%, Chinese at 9.3%, Indian 8.1%, Ukrainian 5.4%, Russian 4.9% and Polish 4.4% (MARAD 2006).

The Apostleship of the Sea (AOS); a Catholic maritime ministry, reaches out to seafarers, fishermen, their families and all who work and travel on the waterways. Their ministry reflects the Church's care and concern to offer spiritual and material assistance to seafarers who are often away for many months from their homes because of the nature of their work and cannot participate in regular parish life. The Apostleship of the Sea is present in 49 arch/dioceses and 61 U.S. maritime ports. They generally operate in ecumenical collaboration. They are served by 79 chaplains and their associates and also numerous volunteers. The Cruise ship chaplaincy registers 645 priests who tend to the spiritual needs of crews and travelers alike.

Gifts the seafarers bring:

The majority of the foreign seafarers are Catholic. Catholic seafarers bring with them their religious and cultural identities; impact the local receiving Church, making vibrant the liturgical celebrations through their worship and popular devotions. They validate the pastoral outreach of the priests who provide the sacramental life of them. Seafarers are very hardworking. They endure harsh sea conditions and connect the spiritual with the temporal reality. Finally, they provide economic contribution through remittances to their families

Challenges:

SEAFARERS

Challenges for seafarers include family separation for long periods of time due to the nature of the work, work discrimination, sub-standard working and living conditions, substitution of contracts, piracy attacks and criminalization of seafarers and ship abandonment by owners which results in seafarers being stranded in foreign shores. Another challenge is that seafarers are often unable to come to shore after months of being at sea due to new US federal regulations regarding docked ships at U.S. ports.

AOS CHAPLAINS

There is a need for more arch/dioceses to support the maritime port ministry. There is also an insufficient number of priests, deacons, religious, and lay volunteers to be port chaplains and team members. Proselytization is another concern as some Protestant groups offer “Mass” without being transparent and informing the Catholic seafarers that the Mass is not a Roman Catholic Mass.

Finally, the U.S. Federal Government requires that all chaplains and chaplaincy members obtain a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card which. At \$150 each, these cards are often cost prohibitive.

AIRPORT, AIRLINE WORKERS AND TRAVELERS

Provenance and History:

For many, the airport is literally a place for departure and arrival of planes and passengers. But for airport and airline workers as well as regular travelers, the airport is a big community with its own particular culture. Some airports have as many as 50,000 workers. In 2008, the combined number of domestic and international passengers was a staggering 809.5 million in all US airports.

The airport ministry is a ‘ministry of the moment’. “Ministry at the airport takes place during flight delays, on breaks, before departures and after arrivals.”^d

Catholic airport ministry has its beginnings in World War II as an outgrowth of military chaplaincy. Then commercial airlines were providing a growing fleet of airplanes to meet the needs of travelers. In the beginning, airport ministry involved pastors in nearby parishes celebrating Mass in a makeshift place in the airport. With the growing pastoral needs also came pastoral responses. Cardinal Cushing of Boston was the first in the world to appoint an airport chaplain in 1946 in Logan International Airport. Currently, there are 59 Catholic airport chaplains and pastoral teams in 29 arch/dioceses and 31 airports, working mostly in interfaith settings. Their mission is to provide spiritual services to people working at or traveling through airports.

Gifts the airport, airline and travelers bring:

This group brings a celebration of cultural, religious and ethnic/racial diversity of people in the airports. In addition, they bring a sense of ecumenical thrust by sharing sacred space for worship and respecting other religious traditions.

Gifts the airport chaplains and associates bring:

Airport chaplains and associates welcome of people regardless of faith, color or creed. They have sensitivity to the traditions of other faiths and they believe in building relationships with ministers of other faiths.

Challenges:

Challenges include security issues, lack of resources for chaplains (some dioceses do not have airport chaplaincies).

MIGRANT FARMWORKERS

Provenance and History:

Approximately 2.5 million people including 100,000 children are employed for wages in U.S farms. About 1.2 million (47 per cent) are undocumented (Pew Hispanic Center Study, 2002). The majority of migrant farmworkers are from Mexico and Central America. They are served by a network of 127 diocesan contacts for ministry with the migrant farmworkers. Many are Hispanic ministry directors, leaders of migrant and rural worker groups and other entities.

The dramatic increase of migrant farmworkers, especially from Mexico, can be traced to the Free-market reforms like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Free-trade agreements, World Bank requirements and Mexico's big-business-friendly policies, brought reductions in public expenditures and government programs for farmers and the poor. Elimination of price support for corn and other basic food items began in 1985 when Mexico signed the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and was later accelerated under NAFTA.^e

Gifts the migrant farm workers bring:

Migrant farm workers are extremely hardworking and are able to work for long hours doing labor intensive jobs. In the face of difficulty, they rely on their religious. They adhere to family values and traditions. They also make economic contribution to the receiving country through taxes and to the sending country through remittances.

Challenges:

Some challenges include occupational hazards as agriculture is among the most dangerous U.S. occupations. Approximately 300,000 farm workers are poisoned annually.^f They also face harassment by immigration enforcement through worksite raids. Other challenges include racial

profiling, low wages, long hours of work and few labor protections if any. There is also a need for better communication of immigration information, immigrant advocacy and legal and labor rights.

Another challenge is the prevalence of substandard living conditions characterized by insufficient water, inadequate bathrooms and pesticide exposure.

There is also a need for more bilingual priests, not only to celebrate Mass but to also lead sacraments (i.e. confessions), counsel and provide leadership formation for parish pastoral leaders. There is a need to educate farm workers/migrants about their human rights and migrants rights, as many migrants are jailed because of lack of knowledge of their basic rights.

CIRCUS AND TRAVELING SHOW FOLKS

Provenance and History:

Diversity and internationality describe the community of traveling show people. Circus performers represent among others, the countries of Eastern and Western Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is estimated that there are about 300,000 people in circus and other traveling shows. About 40 per cent of show folks are Catholic. There are between 50-60 circuses and 300-400 carnivals currently operating in the U.S. The Race Car Apostolate coordinates the ministry to the INDY, CART and NASCAR race car workers and drivers in the United States by maintaining contact with the race car chaplains and supporting and affirming their ministry. The Race Horse Apostolate is presently being developed. Most race horse workers are Hispanics. Pastoral outreach is done in collaboration with the Circus and Traveling Show Ministries Organization. There are 27 chaplains in this ministry.

Gifts the circus and traveling show folks bring:

This group brings a sense of family cohesiveness and views the family as the basis for community. They value collaboration and they have the ability to show others how to infuse humor in their family life.

Challenges:

It is difficult to provide local parish services for circus and travelling show folks because of their lifestyle and work obligations on weekends. As result, a fullness of Christian life is often constrained by circumstance. There is a lack of religious education for children of show folks that travel with their parents. There is a lack of clergy and religious personnel to attend to the spiritual needs of circus and travelling show people. Finally, there are visa issues for foreign showfolks.

APOSTOLATE OF THE ROAD

For all who travel by land, the Apostolate of the Road works to establish chapels and chaplaincies in our railroad stations, truck stops, rest stops, visitor centers, wayside shrines, and parish churches along the highways. This ministry is for passengers, visitors, and workers; and for those who travel on roads and highways throughout the United States. Presently, there are two Truck Stop Chaplaincies and one Railroad Chaplaincy.

Questions for discussion:

1. In your local Church – diocese/parish, is there a special attention (specific pastoral care) for migrants, refugees and travelers? What are those?
2. Do you think that pastoral structures present in the Church are adequate to meet the needs of migrants, refugees and travelers? Any recommendation?
3. How can the Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers (PCMRT) better assist in outreach to new comer immigrants, refugees and travelers in various dioceses/parishes?

^a Teresa Sales, *Brazilians Away from Home*, 2003

^b Cf. History of Maya Ministry, separate attachment

^c Teresa Sales, 2003

^d An airport chaplain has a special opportunity for ministry, a brief time, a graced moment” (Ministry of the Moment, 1997)

^e Institute for Food and Development Policy, *Backgrounder*, 2004

^f M. Reeves, K. Schafer, K. Hallward, and A. Katten, “Fields of Poison: California Farm workers and Pesticides, 1997