



January 2003

A Letter to Migrants



Dear Sisters and Brothers:

In a spirit of fraternal care and solidarity, we, the bishops of Mexico and the United States, have issued a Pastoral Letter addressing our concern for those who have to leave their homes and migrate to another country to provide the necessities of life for themselves and their families. Our pastoral solicitude reaches out to all who are pilgrims in this world, since we all journey together to the Kingdom that awaits us. As Christians we must support each other in the challenges and daily difficulties we encounter in this life.

The difficulties you encounter as migrants are many. If you migrate to become a permanent resident in another country, the culture and language adjustment will be challenging. If you migrate on a temporary basis for work, with or without immigration documents, your work will be difficult and your very lives and safety may sometimes face danger. We cannot help but recognize your plight at these times; and so, as teachers of the faith and promoters of justice in the world, we speak directly to you. The burden is heavy on your backs. We want to lighten the burden. We have challenged both of our nations to recognize your inherent human rights and dignity and to acknowledge the tremendous contributions you make to the economic, cultural, and spiritual advancement of both nations. We have also challenged our governments to pursue more just and fair treatment of all migrants.

We hope that our words, our challenges and warnings can be turned into effective change in existing laws and immigration systems in ways that protect your rights and dignity as God's children. We pledge to do all that is in our power to provide responsive pastoral care so that, although you may be in a foreign land, you will always find a home in every Catholic Church and that you will be welcomed fully into the spiritual life of the Church no matter where you are.

We invoke the protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Church in America, which includes many nations, many people, but remains one in faith, hope and love. May you and your families always experience Our Lady's maternal presence and love during your journey.

With prayers for a safe journey and spiritual fulfillment, we are

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Thomas Wenski
Auxiliary Bishop of Miami
Chairman,
Committee on Migration
United States Conference of Catholic Bishop

Most Reverend Renato Ascencio Le.:.n
Obispo de Ciudad Juarez y Presidente
Comision Episcopal para la Pastoral de la
Movilidad Humana
Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano