

# Migrant Trafficking Vincentian Month



DEFENSORES  
DE VIDAS  
COLOMBIA



Reflection #2

September 2018

Defenders of Life Network

## AIC CONFRONTS THE ISSUE OF



# MIGRANT TRAFFICKING





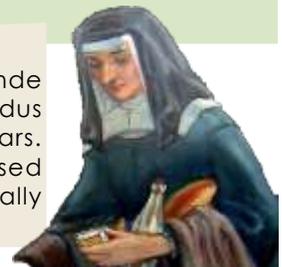
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## ORIENTATION



This is another September in which the eyes of the worldwide Vincentian Family are focused on the humble peasant from Landes who knew how to read the signs of the time in order **to discover the faces of the suffering Christ in the person of the poor**. That reality enables us to understand how the issues of immigration and people being driven from their homeland have been constants throughout the history of humankind.

The reality in XVII century France was no exception. The Thirty Years War and the Fronde Wars devastated the regions of Lorraine and Picardy and led to a massive exodus of peasants, who migrated to Paris. This forced many people to become beggars. Nobles and members of the Court closed themselves up in their palaces and closed their eyes and their hearts to the plight of the peasants (this reality is graphically depicted in the film "Monsieur Vincent").



## VISUALIZE (See)



Beggars, abused women and abandoned children became victims of this situation. However, Vincent de Paul, together with Louise de Marillac, was able to respond by creating **the Confraternities of Charity, the Daughters of Charity and the Congregation of the Mission**, who cared for **the abandoned children, for the beggars of Macon and for the infirm in the Nom-du-Jésus**, thus alleviating the misery of countless individuals. It could be said that **the Vincentian charism arose as a result of the displacement and the marginalization of poor men and women**.

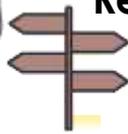
More recently, the **Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air** adopted by the General Assembly of United Nations (2000) focused on the human rights of migrants, on their integrity and the dignity and on the need for governments to exchange information in order to put an end to these crimes against humanity.

## REMEMBER:

- Migration can be voluntary or forced (a personal or collective decision that is influenced by natural disasters and/or social, political, religious conflicts that oblige an individual or a group of individuals to leave their homeland).
- Migrants, the object of illegal trafficking, are at risk: they can suffocate in the containers that are being used to smuggle them; they can die in the desert or the forest; they can drown in the ocean while they are being transported by individuals who become rich by treating migrants as another form of merchandise.
- It is difficult to uncover this crime because of its hidden and secret nature and that makes it difficult to determine when migration is facilitated by traffickers.



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## UNDERSTAND (Judge)



## Why is trafficking of migrants a problem?

- ◆ Nations defend their borders from the perspective of security and territorial integrity.
- ◆ The interest of the State conflicts with the interests of those who migrate.
- ◆ There are networks of traffickers who facilitate the crossing of borders.
- ◆ Routes and the cost for using those routes have been established.
- ◆ People interested in migrating are willing to pay the cost of using those established routes.

## According to the statistics of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

- The illegal trafficking of migrants and related activities results in the death of many people and provides criminals with millions of dollars. It also encourages corruption through bribery of government officials and promotes organized crime in the countries of origin, countries of transit and the countries of final destination.
- The primary routes of illegal trafficking are eastern, northern and western Africa to Europe, and from South America to North America.
- Illegal trafficking takes on many forms: simple/complex, safe/dangerous, low cost/expensive. The degree of safety and the surety of arriving at one's destiny depends on money (migrants, depending in their country of origin, pay between 2,000 and 10,000 dollars)



**It is estimated that this crime generates 6,750 million dollars paid by those entering the United States.**

**Annually, about three million people enter the United States illegally; the majority enter in trucks in which they are hidden; some also cross the borders on foot, by railroad or by secret tunnels.**

**ABOUT 55,000 MIGRANTS ARE THE OBJECT OF ILLEGAL TRAFFIC FROM EASTERN, NORTHERN AND WESTERN AFRICA, CREATING AN INCOME OF 150 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE CRIMINALS.**

**Between 1996 and 2011 at least 1,691 people lost their lives while travelling through the desert and in 2008, at least 1,000 people died while crossing the ocean.**



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## REACT (Act)



**Migrants, the object of illegal trafficking, are the victims of serious violations against their human rights. The effects of this are experienced in all the countries affected by the illegal trafficking of migrants.**

In the **countries of origin:** Families go into debt paying the cost established by the traffickers and yet have no guarantee that their "investment" will have a positive result. Even worse, they may never receive any news about their family members (are they safe, have they been imprisoned, are they dead...?).

In the **countries of transit:** migrants may find that they have been abandoned with limited resources to continue their journey (or they may discover that they have been deceived by the traffickers).

The **countries of destination** attempt to intercept and process these cases, but the costs are very high. The communities in these countries are affected and the criminal element attempts to take advantage of a new group of vulnerable people that can be exploited.



## What can we do in light of this crime?

In our work we must demand respect for the human rights and the dignity of migrants.

### As AIC members, let us reflect:

1. Let's identify in our counties the organizations that assist migrants (thus creating a **list of supporters**).
2. In each group reflect on three ways of collaboration that:
  - i. Support migrants.
  - ii. Create a greater awareness of this issue in our social and family networks.
3. Let's say: **NO to the exploitation of migrants; NO to racism; NO to xenophobia.** Make a sign and post it in a visible place in your office or home.