



“We cannot simply tell migrants to have courage and be patient. We must give them concrete hope”

- Pope Francis

## Migration

Migration is the displacement of an individual or a group of people who move from their present place of residence to another. It is a change of residence.

When people leave a specific region or country, the word “emigration” is used. The arrival of people to their new place of residence, on the other hand, is called “immigration”.

Migration is not something new. Rather, it has been a reality from the very beginning of human existence and continues to the present day. Migration has led “to an encounter between various peoples and the birth of new civilizations”<sup>1</sup>. This is understandable as the human person is able to search for a better way of life and better living conditions. Therefore, human beings have moved and continue to move throughout the earth.

### Present day migration

According to the Migration Data Portal<sup>2</sup>, there are 7.8 billion people in the world, of which *280.6 million are migrants*, that is, 3.6% of the population. This is a very important reality to keep in mind, analyze and act upon. Never before have the different cultures of the world encountered one another so frequently – encountered one another physically through the presence of people from other cultures, and also encountered one another virtually through various means of communication. This shows that the world is *interconnected* through an infinite number of cultural bridges – in other words it is a *diverse world that is joined together*. Therefore, “migration today cannot be understood without also understanding the concept of globalization”<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, 2020: [Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship](#).

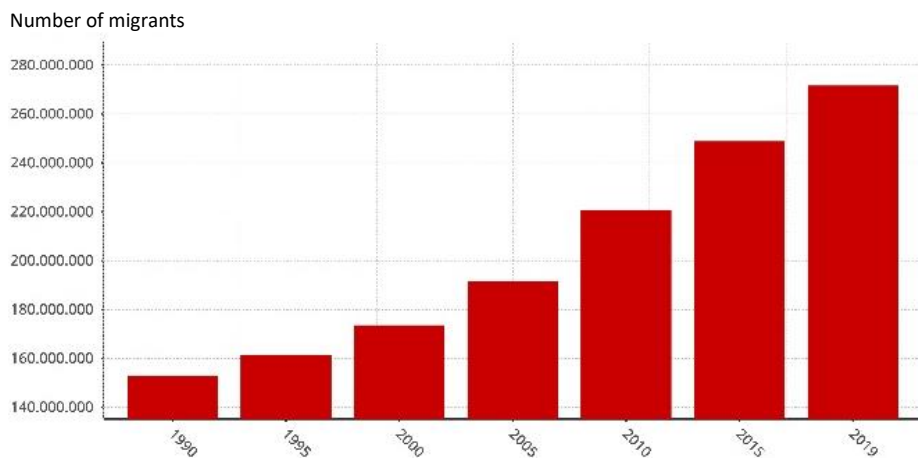
<sup>2</sup> For more information: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> Luis González-Carvajal Santabárbara, 2005: *En defensa de los humillados y ofendidos*.

Migration has become one of the most significant present-day international problems. This involves a humanitarian commitment that concerns not only world governments, but also society in general, international organizations and, of course, the Catholic Church.

That is why recent Popes have referred to migration as a “sign of the times” which, therefore, must be observed and interpreted in light of the Gospel in order to understand this reality and in order to find solutions.

### Evolution of the total number of people who are migrants in the world Population residing in a country other than their country of origin



Source: UN Migration (IOM), Chart: [epdata](#)

### Types of human migration

Human migration based on its geographic dimension: Migration is internal when people move or change their residence within their own country. It is external or international when individuals emigrate to another country.

Human migration based on origin and destination: This refers to migration between urban and rural areas.

Migration based on the degree of freedom: Not every migration is free and voluntary. People are often forced to leave their country for economic reasons or as a result of a natural disaster, armed conflict or persecution for one reason or another.

Migration based on age: Migration of adults is the most common form but there are also instances of migration of elderly individuals as well as children.

Regular and irregular migration: Regular migration refers to those individuals who enter the receiving country in a legal way. Irregular migration refers to those individuals who, for various reasons (almost always because of poverty) emigrate to another country and enter that country in an illegal way without any form of documentation.



## The Catholic Church and its role in the field of migration

In light of the reality of migration, the Church insists on the need to affirm and defend the *rights of migrants* in order to guarantee these individuals a basic degree of protection and recognition.

Pope Francis, during an International Forum on Migration and Peace (February 2017), spoke about the reality of migration and summarized this theme with four words: **to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.**

In the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, the Pope stated: **“it is not a case of implementing welfare programmes from the top down, but rather of undertaking a journey together, through these four actions, in order to build cities and countries that, while preserving their respective cultural and religious identity, are open to differences and know how to promote them in the spirit of human fraternity”<sup>4</sup>.**

**To welcome** immigrants implies not only to provide these individuals with food and accommodation (the Church does not want to become involved in simply giving people handouts) but also to provide these men and women with what is necessary to guarantee them basic personal security, for example, health care, education, work, worship. This is an authentic welcome.

**To protect:** Welcoming goes hand in hand with protecting, that is, ensuring the recognition and defense of the human rights and personal dignity of every migrant.

The migratory experience often makes people more vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence. We are speaking about millions of migrant workers, male and female – and among these, particularly men and women in irregular situations – of those exiled and seeking asylum, and of those who are victims of trafficking. Defending their inalienable rights, ensuring their fundamental freedoms and respecting their dignity are duties from which no one can be exempted. Protecting these brothers and sisters is a moral imperative.

**To promote:** “Protecting is not enough. What is required is the promotion of an integral human development of migrants, exiles and refugees. This ‘takes place by attending to the inestimable goods of justice, peace, and the care of creation’. Development, according to the social doctrine of the Church, is an undeniable right of every human being”<sup>5</sup>.

It is necessary to welcome and protect people and at the same also necessary to involve them in the process of development, that is, “make them protagonists of their own redemption. It is clear that this should never be separated from the obligation to defend and protect these men and women from every form of social discrimination and

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, 2020: [Encyclical Letter Fratelli Tutti of the Holy Father Francis on Fraternity and Social Friendship](#), §129.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, 2017: [Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”](#).

exploitation. Indeed, we must be mindful of the fact that migrants are human beings, are children of God”<sup>6</sup>.

**To integrate:** “Integration, which is neither assimilation nor incorporation, is a two-way process, rooted essentially in the joint recognition of the other’s cultural richness: it is not the superimposing of one culture over another, nor mutual isolation”<sup>7</sup>.

Integration includes the *religious* and *cultural* aspects specific to each individual and also specific to each country. In other words, integration implies accepting others and opening oneself to accept these individuals as members of society, respecting their culture and religion. At the same, immigrants must work to accept others with their own customs and thus, adapt to a new way of life.

The process of integrating people who are migrants should not be one of tolerance and/or generosity but rather should be a process of seeing, listening, and knowing these persons and thus, assisting them as neighbors and respecting them. At the same time, immigrants must be open to knowing and respecting the culture of the place that has received them.

The Pope states: “I believe that conjugating these four verbs, in the first person singular and in the first person plural, is today a responsibility, a duty we have towards our brothers and sisters who, for various reasons, have been forced to leave their homeland: a *duty of justice, of civility and of solidarity*”.

Today, our globalized society has become intercultural. We are dealing with a phenomenon that we must embrace and manage if we want to avoid future conflicts. Therefore, it is possible that our vision of these individuals may change if we begin to view each of these men and women as Christ himself – a lesson that Saint Vincent has taught us.

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Some of the consequences of migration are human trafficking and homelessness. Very often, people have to leave their homeland because, as we have seen, there is a lack of work, they find themselves in a situation of extreme poverty, or they experience the affects of war and armed conflicts. When migrants lack the resources to obtain decent accommodation, they will often remain in shelters and, at times, begin to live on the street. Thus, those involved in human trafficking take advantage of this situation and offer these individuals work that will pay them well – work that never becomes a reality. These individuals are deceived and exploited.

Therefore, we have decided to deal with these three topics together: migration, human trafficking and homelessness. In doing so, we hope to offer you a global perspective that will enable all of us to see the interrelatedness of these global present-day issues.

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<sup>6</sup> Pope Francis, 2017: [\*Address of his Holiness Pope Francis to Participants in the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”\*](#).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.





“Human trafficking [...] is an open wound on the body of Christ, on the body of all humanity; it is a deep wound that affects every one of us too. [...] [I encourage all men and women to work together,] opposing with all our might every form of exploitation in human trafficking”<sup>8</sup>

- Pope Francis

## Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is one of the most serious violations of human rights. It is a global issue and one of the most shameful crimes that exists. Human trafficking deprives millions of people throughout the world of their dignity. Human trafficking deceives men, women and children in every part of the globe and places them in the midst of situations of exploitation. The most well-known form of trafficking is sexual exploitation but hundreds of thousands of people are victims of forced labor, domestic slavery, organ extraction and childhood begging.

### Sex and age of victims of human trafficking

This theme reflects the dramatic situation of the different types of victims of human trafficking. Here we must also be mindful of the serious and devastating consequences that this phenomenon has on the victims themselves, on their family, as well as on the health of society. We previously referred to sexual exploitation, forced labor and many other forms of slavery, all of which are assaults on human dignity, equality and the civilization of love.

Worldwide, one in five victims of human trafficking is a child, while in poorer areas in Africa and Asia, the majority of the victims are children. Children are the object of trafficking and used in begging, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment (child soldiers).

Two-thirds of the victims of human trafficking are women and the majority of these victims are young women who have been deceived with false promises of work. These women are raped, drugged, imprisoned, beaten and threatened with acts of violence. Many of these young women have had their passports taken away, have been blackmailed or burdened with debt.

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<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis, 2022: [Video Message of his Holiness Pope Francis on the Occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.](#)

The number of cases involving men as victims of trafficking is disproportionately smaller than that of women.

The fact that there are many forms of human trafficking means that there is no single profile of the typical victim. There are cases of trafficking all over the world, and victims are selected regardless of their gender, age or origin. For example, children are brought from Eastern Europe to Western Europe and forced to beg and steal wallets. Many young men and women from Africa are deceived with the promise of work as models or au pair (caring for children in exchange for accommodation) and then find themselves trapped in a world of sexual exploitation and pornography. False promises of legal work are made to many women from Asia, promises that in reality turn into virtual confinement and abuse. At the same time, many men and women have been brought from South America to North America where they are forced to work in deplorable conditions harvesting crops.

#### **Trafficking across the world:**

- 49% are women
- 21% are girls
- 18% are men
- 12% are boys

#### **Types of exploitation:**

- Women: 70% endure sexual exploitation  
20% endure work exploitation  
10% other forms of exploitation
- Men: 89% endure work exploitation  
7% endure sexual exploitation  
4% other forms of exploitation

### **How can we help?**

There are various means to combat human trafficking on the national and international level. During the 2000 General Assembly of the United Nations, the Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime was approved. This document is intended to prevent, repress, and sanction human trafficking, especially trafficking of women and children. This document went into effect at the end of 2003. As the only legal international document that deals with the crime of trafficking, the Protocol is intended to prevent and combat trafficking as well as protect and assist the victims and promote cooperation among countries in order to confront this crime.

On the national level, countries continue to apply the Protocol and seek to incorporate human trafficking legislation into their domestic law. Year after year, we see an increase in the number of countries that legislate against human trafficking and that have police units specialized in this area. Nonetheless, despite the increase in the number of convictions for the crime of trafficking, the number is still low. Addressing this issue requires more effective implementation of the Protocol on the national level and greater cooperation on the regional and international levels.

The fight against human trafficking should not be viewed only as the responsibility of local authorities. Ordinary citizens can help combat this crime by being aware of the issue and



making sure that the plight of victims does not go unnoticed. There are many ways to help combat trafficking and have a positive impact:

- **Remain alert:** If you see something that may be related to human trafficking, notify the police or use the local anti-trafficking helpline. Suspicions can be awakened in the workplace or in private life. If you are not sure, it is better to be wrong than to let another victim remain enslaved.
- **Investigate:** Find out what is being done in your community and see if you can do something. Encourage your friends, family and neighbors to become more aware of this crime. Many national authorities and non-governmental organizations are participating in the fight against human trafficking.
- **Learn more:** Read the [AIC training documents on human trafficking](#) that we shared in 2018-2019 (AIC website: Publications/Training Booklets/Booklet #29). There you will learn about the Blue Heart Campaign against human trafficking, led by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC). You can also visit their website: [www.unodc.org/blueheart](http://www.unodc.org/blueheart). This international initiative attempts to raise public awareness about the plight of victims and at the same time seeks to obtain political support to prosecute criminals involved in the crime of human trafficking.
- **Provide assistance with regard to verifying job offers:** Many people are attracted by job offers that offer good benefits and wages (often including trips and a change of residence to another country). In many cases, these are methods used by criminals to attract individuals and bring them into trafficking situations.
- **Use the internet correctly:** It is important to inform parents and the young men and women whom we accompany in our various services about the issue of human trafficking, especially since various digital networks are ideal spaces for trafficking agents to make contact with victims. In many cases, it is with personal information that they are able to attract children and adolescents. Parents should teach their children how to safeguard such essential information and how to use social networks. Traffickers are often friendly on these networks as they begin to take an interest in the lives of potential victims.

Sources: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;  
AIC Training Program on Migrant Trafficking and Human Trafficking, July 2018-January 2019.





“Everyone deserves a home”

“There is no act of charity that is not accompanied by justice.”

- Saint Vincent de Paul

## Homelessness

### What is homelessness?

Homelessness refers to the social phenomenon of people who lack a permanent, dignified place to live, a place where they can rest, keep warm, and enjoy privacy. They are obliged to live on the street or in temporary shelters. These men and women are called homeless individuals.

Some of the causes of homelessness are the following: migration, poverty, unemployment, emotional trauma resulting from drug abuse, domestic violence, rupture of family bonds, physical handicaps.

Homeless men and women will often find themselves in the following situation:

- **Lack of food:** homeless men and women do not have a place where they can eat and therefore depend on the good will of a neighbor, a community soup kitchen or what they might find thrown away by other people.
- **Lack of social relationships:** homeless individuals do not have family members or friends to support them and assist them. This lack of family relationships makes them feel abandoned and forgotten.
- **Lack of self-esteem:** homeless people not only lose confidence in themselves but also lose their desire to live and recover.
- **Without rights:** homeless individuals lack housing and work, and often lack access to various social services.
- **Dignified death:** homeless people often die on the street, alone, without anyone beside them. If they are lucky, someone may notice them and call emergency services to take away their body.



## What do homeless individuals have to face?

Extract from the article “The drama of present day homelessness”<sup>9</sup>:

“Every individual, from the time of their birth, has rights and dignity. Nevertheless, when people become homeless, they will often find themselves helpless. People never lose their dignity, but at times, people feel unable to defend themselves. Many have had to confront numerous traumatic experiences [...] which affected them psychologically and also impaired their ability to make decisions. Often these individuals will also find themselves with no financial resources and no family members whom they can rely on.

In these circumstances, homeless men and women see their hopes fading as they discover that their efforts are unable to resolve the problems they are faced with. Thus, their problems become more complex and create more suffering. Then, their ‘motivation to change’ becomes a ‘need to adapt in order to survive’, creating the false illusion that they do not deserve anything better. [...]

At the same time, society often rejects homeless people, and this contributes to creating superficial and sometimes incorrect ideas about this issue. This, in turn, results in homeless men and women having to confront prejudice, discrimination and the loss of their rights.”

## Saint Vincent de Paul, Saint Louise de Marillac and homelessness

Father Michael Carroll, in his article “Homelessness – Our Heritage and Challenge”, published by the Vincentian Family<sup>10</sup>, speaks about the way in which Saint Vincent de Paul became aware of the issue of homelessness in France and called upon other influential individuals, with whom he had established a relationship, to resolve this situation. We provide a summary of this article in the following paragraphs:

On various occasions, Queen Anne of Austria provided Saint Vincent with large sums of money to establish missions of the Congregation. One of these places was Sedan and was established in the midst of the Thirty Years War.

On another occasion, Vincent used this money to build 13 small houses near Saint Lazare, the motherhouse of the Congregation of the Mission. Those houses were rented to the Ladies of Charity who housed orphaned children there.

“Vincent, at the age of 72, was running massive relief programs at the ‘Name of Jesus Hospice’, providing soup twice a day for thousands of poor people at Saint-Lazare and feeding thousands of others at the houses of the Daughters of Charity. He organized collections, gathering each week 5-6 thousand pounds of meat, 2-3 thousand eggs, and provisions of clothing and utensils. He provided lodging for the displaced. [...]

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<sup>9</sup> Partido por un mundo más justo (M+J), 2021: [“El drama del sinhogarismo en estos tiempos”](#).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Carroll, CM, 2022: [“Homelessness – Our Heritage and Challenge”](#).

Though the terminology ‘systemic change’ was unknown to Vincent and Louise, they both recognized, on a seminal level, that education and job training were extremely important in transforming the lives of the homeless and the poor. Vincent and Louise de Marillac were deeply committed to the education and moral formation of young people living on the streets or in dire conditions. They wanted them to develop the skills needed to get jobs. For that reason, with Vincent’s support, Louise founded the ‘petites écoles’ (little schools) and made the instruction of poor young people one of the principal works of the first Daughters of Charity.”

In this regard, Father Robert Maloney, CM states: “Homelessness was a major focus of St Vincent’s charitable work – from accommodating foundling children abandoned by their parents, to organizing aid for those displaced by conflict in Lorraine, to providing soup to thousands of Paris’ poorest citizens. In many ways, St Vincent’s initiatives were foundational in establishing the principles of structured and well-administered charity we see today. Central too were the values which underpinned this work: St Vincent demanded diligence and accountability from those who served the poor under his watch”<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Malone, CM, 2018: [“St Vincent and the Homeless”](#).



## Some AIC actions to support people who are migrants, victims of human trafficking and/or homeless

Various groups of volunteers from the AIC network support people who are migrants, victims of human trafficking and/or homeless.

During their service, volunteers provide for various needs:

- **Nutrition**
  - providing breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner
  - food distribution
  - community gardens
- **Health and Hygiene**
  - access to showers and washing machines
  - distribution of hygienic articles
  - medical and nursing assistance
  - distribution of medicines
  - emotional support
  - distribution of blankets and mattresses
  - from the beginning of the pandemic: providing masks and other protective equipment, tests and COVID vaccines
- **Accommodation** (temporary and permanent)
- **Education**
  - teaching the language of their new homeland
  - training sessions on various topics
  - job training workshops
  - school support
- **Work and social guidance**
- **Strengthening of social bonds**
  - leisure activities for children
  - strengthening family ties
  - sports and leisure activities
  - excursions
- **Security:** holistic support to victims of violence and human trafficking
- **Luggage storage services**





AIC Colombia



AIC Italy

*Job training workshops for migrants*



AIC Italy



AIC Nigeria

*Community gardens with migrants*



AIC Colombia



AIC Madagascar

*Accommodation and/or meals for people left homeless after their homes were destroyed*





AIC Poland

*Leisure activities for migrant children*



AIC Ukraine

*Distribution of food and other material to homeless people*



AIC Ukraine



AIC Italy

*Breakfast for homeless people*



AIC Ukraine

*Meals for migrants*



AIC Spain

*Accommodation for migrants*



AIC Francia

*Day Center for homeless women*



## Questions to reflect on the topics of the training reflection

### On migration

1. What are the most serious problems that are reflected in the countries of origin of people who are migrants? (a maximum of three)
2. What are the benefits in the countries where these individuals settle that produce this migration? (a maximum of three)
3. What are the traumas that migrants experience as they travel for their country of origin to their new place of settlement? (a maximum of three)
4. What are the primary activities of the AIC on behalf of migrants? (a maximum of three)

### On human trafficking

1. What are the most serious effects of human trafficking on its victims and their family? (a maximum of three)
2. What challenges does human trafficking impose on our human, Christian and Vincentian commitment? (a maximum of three)
3. What are the primary activities that the AIC can engage in to combat human trafficking and to assist the victims of human trafficking? (a maximum of four)

### On homelessness

1. In our present social environment, what problems does homelessness reflect and what problems does it produce? (a maximum of four)
2. What activities of our Founders with regard to homelessness continue to be valid today? (a maximum of three)
3. What have been the primary achievements and obstacles regarding the realization of the "13 Houses Campaign"? (a maximum of four)
4. What are the main activities of the AIC with individuals and their family members who are affected by homelessness? (a maximum of three)

### In general

1. Which of the effects of the pandemic have directly influenced migration, human trafficking and homelessness? (a maximum of six)
2. What relationships do you see between migration, human trafficking and homelessness? (a maximum of six)

