

## ***Rejoice in the Lord***

**By Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.Ss.R.  
Archbishop of Newark**

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### **Loving God and Our Neighbor**

Thanks be to God, effective June 20/21, our churches have entered Phase III of the reopening process, and we are beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel. We shouldn't kid ourselves, however. The pandemic remains a serious—deadly—problem especially for those who are most vulnerable.

We need to keep in mind that our reasons for closing last March were not frivolous or unnecessarily cautious. Especially here in New Jersey, we have seen the devastating effects of the coronavirus. Imagine how much worse it might have been if we had failed to act!



So, as we gradually resume our liturgical and sacramental activities, please carefully observe all the necessary regulations and social distancing directives outlined on the [rcan.org](http://rcan.org) website. These include the following:

- Limiting the maximum number of participants for public Masses, Funerals, Baptisms, and Weddings.
- Observing all the directives on social distancing, wearing of masks, and sanitizing from Phase One and Phase Two of the reopening process.
- Recognizing that faithful continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- Parishes will continue to livestream Mass so that those unable to attend may maintain a spiritual connection with their local parish.

We want always to be good neighbors who reverence and respect one another, especially the most vulnerable people in our communities. That's why we urge everyone to be conscious of our serious responsibility for the health and wellbeing of all.

In a recent issue of this newsletter (#19, June 5, 2020), I made this observation:

*Love of God and Love of Neighbor are the two great commandments given to us by our Redeemer. Nothing is more important. Nothing should be allowed to get in the way of our wholehearted, unconditional observance of these Laws of Love.*

But, as I also observed, the question we invariably ask (consciously or subconsciously) is “Who is my neighbor?” Who are we required to love especially when we are in the midst of a pandemic that threatens our health, our economic well-being and our peace of mind? And when we are experiencing profound social unrest caused by the resurgence of racism and violence in communities throughout our country.

In that same issue, I asked:

*How can we be good neighbors to those who are outside our inner circle when we are required to practice social distancing and place our own needs first? How can we resist the temptation to be selfish and indifferent to the needs of those we don't see and can't touch?*

The Vatican's Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development recently published new guidelines for responding to the challenges of assisting internally displaced persons (IDPs). These are men, women and children who are homeless either because of natural disasters or political upheaval, who have remained in their own countries and not crossed any international borders. Because, strictly speaking, they are not migrants or refugees, IDPs do not have access to international relief efforts. Too often, they are among the most helpless and forgotten members of the human family.

The Vatican's guidelines, entitled “Pastoral Orientations on Internally Displaced Persons,” are intended to provide a series of key considerations that may be useful in pastoral planning and program development for the effective assistance of IDPs. They offer suggestions and guidance for action based on four words: *welcome, protect, promote, and integrate*. Pope Francis has proposed these four concepts with respect to migrants and refugees, and they are now being applied to internally displaced persons.

May we always extend to others the same *welcome* that Christ extended to strangers. May we do whatever it takes to *protect* these most vulnerable neighbors. May we all work together to promote the interests of internally displaced peoples. May we seek and find ways to integrate them into the mainstream of our society as true sisters and brothers in Christ.

May the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of all the Americas, inspire us to meet Christ in our neighbors, so that we all may be united in our diversity, as members of the one family of God.



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## A Message from Pope Francis: Words of Challenge and Hope

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS**  
**for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees**  
**27 September 2020**

*Like Jesus Christ, forced to flee.*

*Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating internally displaced persons.*



At the beginning of this year, in my Address to the members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, I pointed to the tragedy of internally displaced people as one of the challenges of our contemporary world: “Situations of conflict and humanitarian emergencies, aggravated by climate change, are increasing the numbers of displaced persons and affecting people already living in a state of dire poverty. Many of the countries experiencing these situations lack adequate structures for meeting the needs of the displaced” (9 January 2020).

The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has issued the document “Pastoral Orientations on Internally Displaced People” (Vatican City, 5 May 2020), which aims to inspire and encourage the pastoral work of the Church in this specific area.

For these reasons, I have decided to devote this Message to the drama of internally displaced persons, an often unseen tragedy that the global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated. In fact, due to its virulence, severity and geographical extent, this crisis has impacted on many other humanitarian emergencies that affect millions of people, which has relegated to the bottom of national political agendas those urgent international efforts essential to saving lives. But “this is not a time for forgetfulness. The crisis we are facing should not make us forget the many other crises that bring suffering to so many people” (Urbi et Orbi Message, 12 April 2020).

In the light of the tragic events that have marked 2020, I would like this Message, although concerned with internally displaced persons, to embrace all those who are experiencing situations of precariousness, abandonment, marginalization and rejection as a result of COVID-19.

I would like to start with the image that inspired Pope Pius XII in his Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia* (1 August 1952). During the flight into Egypt, the child Jesus experienced with his parents the tragic fate of the displaced and refugees, “which is marked by fear, uncertainty and unease (cf. Mt 2:13-15, 19-23). Unfortunately, in our own times, millions of families can identify with this sad reality. Almost every day the television and papers carry news of refugees fleeing from hunger, war and other grave dangers, in search of security and a dignified life for themselves and for their families” (Angelus, 29 December 2013). In each of these people, forced to flee to safety, Jesus is present as he was at the time of Herod. In the faces of the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, strangers and prisoners, we are called to see the face of Christ who pleads with us to help (cf. Mt

25:31-46). If we can recognize him in those faces, we will be the ones to thank him for having been able to meet, love and serve him in them.

Displaced people offer us this opportunity to meet the Lord, “even though our eyes find it hard to recognize him: his clothing in tatters, his feet dirty, his face disfigured, his body wounded, his tongue unable to speak our language” (Homily, 15 February 2019). We are called to respond to this pastoral challenge with the four verbs I indicated in my Message for this Day in 2018: welcome, protect, promote and integrate. To these words, I would now like to add another six pairs of verbs that deal with very practical actions and are linked together in a relationship of cause and effect.

You have to know in order to understand. Knowledge is a necessary step towards understanding others. Jesus himself tells us this in the account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus: “While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (Lk 24:15-16). When we talk about migrants and displaced persons, all too often we stop at statistics. But it is not about statistics, it is about real people! If we encounter them, we will get to know more about them. And knowing their stories, we will be able to understand them. We will be able to understand, for example, that the precariousness that we have come to experience as a result of this pandemic is a constant in the lives of displaced people.

It is necessary to be close in order to serve. It may seem obvious, yet often it is the contrary. “But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where the man was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him” (Lk 10:33-34). Fears and prejudices – all too many prejudices – keep us distant from others and often prevent us from “becoming neighbors” to them and serving them with love. Drawing close to others often means being willing to take risks, as so many doctors and nurses have taught us in recent months. This readiness to draw near and serve goes beyond a mere sense of duty. Jesus gave us the greatest example of this when he washed the feet of his disciples: he took off his cloak, knelt down and dirtied his hands (cf. Jn 13:1-15).

In order to be reconciled, we need to listen. God himself taught us this by sending his Son into the world. He wanted to listen to the plea of suffering humanity with human ears: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son... that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17). A love that reconciles and saves begins with listening. In today’s world, messages multiply but the practice of listening is being lost. Yet it is only through humble and attentive listening that we can truly be reconciled. In 2020, silence has reigned for weeks in our streets. A dramatic and troubling silence, but one that has given us the opportunity to listen to the plea of the vulnerable, the displaced and our seriously ill planet. Listening gives us an opportunity to be reconciled with our neighbor, with all those who have been “discarded”, with ourselves and with God, who never tires of offering us his mercy.

In order to grow, it is necessary to share. Sharing was an essential element of the first Christian community: “Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32). God did not want the resources of our planet to benefit only a few. This was not the Lord’s will! We have to learn to share in order to grow together, leaving no one behind. The pandemic has reminded us how we are all in the same boat. Realizing that we have the same concerns and fears

has shown us once more that no one can be saved alone. To grow truly, we must grow together, sharing what we have, like the boy who offered Jesus five barley loaves and two fish... yet they proved enough for five thousand people (cf. Jn 6:1-15)!

We need to be involved in order to promote. As Jesus was with the Samaritan woman (cf. Jn 4:1-30). The Lord approaches her, listens to her, speaks to her heart, and then leads her to the truth and makes her a herald of the Good News: “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did! Can this be the Christ?” (v. 29). Sometimes the impulse to serve others prevents us from seeing their real riches. If we really want to promote those whom we assist, we must involve them and make them agents in their own redemption. The pandemic has reminded us of how essential co-responsibility is, and that only with the contribution of everyone – even of those groups so often underestimated – can we face this crisis. We must find “the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity” (Meditation in Saint Peter’s Square, 27 March 2020).

It is necessary to cooperate in order to build. That is what the Apostle Paul tells the community of Corinth: “I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgement” (1 Cor 1:10). Building the Kingdom of God is a duty common to all Christians, and for this reason it is necessary that we learn to cooperate, without yielding to the temptation to jealousy, discord and division. In the present context it should be reiterated: “This is not a time for self-centredness, because the challenge we are facing is shared by all, without distinguishing between persons” (Urbi et Orbi Message, 12 April 2020). To preserve our common home and make it conform more and more to God’s original plan, we must commit ourselves to ensuring international cooperation, global solidarity and local commitment, leaving no one excluded.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 13 May 2020, Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Fatima.

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## My prayer for you

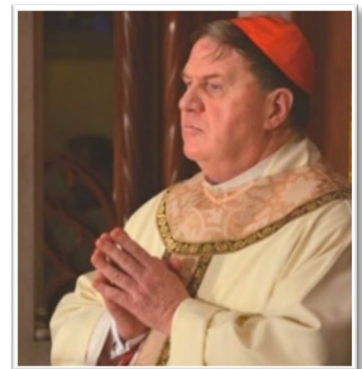
I wish to make my own this prayer offered by Pope Francis on behalf of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons:

Father, you entrusted to Saint Joseph what you held most precious: the child Jesus and his Mother, in order to protect them from the dangers and threats of the wicked.

Grant that we may experience his protection and help. May he, who shared in the sufferings of those who flee from the hatred of the powerful, console and protect all our brothers and sisters driven by war, poverty and necessity to leave their homes and their lands to set out as refugees for safer places.

Help them, through the intercession of Saint Joseph, to find the strength to persevere, give them comfort in sorrows and courage amid their trials.

Grant to those who welcome them some of the tender love of this just and wise father, who loved Jesus as a true son and sustained Mary at every step of the way.



May he, who earned his bread by the work of his hands, watch over those who have seen everything in life taken away and obtain for them the dignity of a job and the serenity of a home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, whom Saint Joseph saved by fleeing to Egypt, and trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whom he loved as a faithful husband in accordance with your will. Amen.

Loving Father, during this time of worldwide crisis, how can we walk with our migrant, refugee and internally displaced brothers and sisters? How can we share their journeys? Lord, show us how to follow in your footsteps as you walk with those who have no place to call home.

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