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Editorial

Migration and Poverty

While encouraging the development of a better world, we cannot remain silent about the scandal of poverty in its various forms. Violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups: these are some of the chief elements of poverty which need to be overcome. Often these are precisely the elements which mark migratory movements, thus linking migration to poverty. Fleeing from situations of extreme poverty or persecution in the hope of a better future, or simply to save their own lives, millions of persons choose to migrate. Despite their hopes and expectations, they often encounter mistrust, rejection and exclusion, to say nothing of tragedies and disasters which offend their human dignity.¹

The words of Pope Francis set the tone of this issue of *Asian Horizons* on "Migration and Poverty." Pope Francis has been an eloquent spokesperson of the migrants and refugees, inviting people and nations to become more conscientiously aware of the plight of the migrants and of the solidarity to be extended to them. Pope Francis' choice of Lampedusa for his first official trip outside Rome was perhaps symbolic. In his homily, the Pope attacked the "globalization of indifference" and the "culture of comfort" that makes us "insensitive to the cries of other people."² In his message on the 101st World Day of Migration, Pope Francis elaborates further on the need of solidarity with the migrants:

The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable... Today this takes on a particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of migration, large

¹Francis, "Migrants and Refugees: Towards a better World," Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees, (3 August 2013), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html

²Francis, Homily at Lampedusa, 8 July 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html

numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions. Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.³

Instead of a "globalization of indifference," he points out that it is "necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane."⁴ In *Evangelii Gaudium* the Pope exhorts all countries to a "generous openness" to the migrants.⁵

Though migration is not a new phenomenon, it has dramatically increased in recent years — more than 214 million international migrants and 740 million internal migrants as per 2010 statistics⁶ — bringing about drastic changes in global demographics, religion, culture, politics and economics. There are well-to-do people who migrate looking for better opportunities. But, the vast majority of them are compelled to migrate due to utter poverty or unemployment or political instability in their homeland. On the one hand, migration offers new hopes and new opportunities of growth and development. On the other hand, many of them are subjected to rejection, discrimination, unfair labour practices, sexual harassment, etc. That many of the migrants are illegal adds to their sufferings. Moreover, being uprooted from their social, cultural, religious contexts most of them undergo profound crises. In many countries, even basic healthcare is denied to them, if they are undocumented. Poverty and migration pose significant challenges to governments, human rights, justice as well as the pastoral care of the Church. Discussions on migration often revolve around economy, national identity and national security. Moreover, these discussions are led by

³Francis, "Church Without Frontiers, Mother to All," Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees, (3 September 2014), http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20140903_world-migrants-day-2015.html

⁴Francis, "Church Without Frontiers, Mother to All."

⁵Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Joy of the Gospel, (24 November 2013), 210, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

⁶International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2010*, http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Newsrelease/docs/WM2010_FINAL_23_11_2010.pdf

politicians, economists and sociologists, whereas religions and faith traditions play only a nominal role.

The authors in this issue reflect on the issue of migration and poverty in the background of the socio-political, economic and cultural issues involved, at the same time, responding to it from the perspective of faith and in the light of faith. The first four articles try to give an orientation to a theology of migration, based on the biblical perspectives. Others try to develop a theology, mainly based on the Christian concept of justice, especially drawing inspiration from the bible as well as from the Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Lúcas Chan offers an ethical reflection on migration by exploring the virtue of hospitality in the book of Ruth. Chan points out that the practice of Christian hospitality beyond a personal level will help reforming our contemporary society into one that incorporates immigrants in a Christian way. Analysing the two Hebrew terms *gēr* and *noḳrî* which denote migrants, Paul Kalluveetil explains how Christians have to find Jesus in the migrants. Christoph Stenschke examines migration and poverty in the Acts of the Apostles and shows how early Christian mission is closely linked to migration, and its significance for the mission today. Edmund Chia dwells upon the challenge of migration in Australia, based on the experience of ordinary Australians, and the Catholic response. He engages in a theological reflection, mainly based on a few Gospel narratives.

Kristin E. Heyer deals with the politics of immigration and the catholic response to it. According to her, economic functionalism and fear-based approaches dehumanises the migrants, whereas contributions from the scripture and the Catholic Social tradition can provide an ethic of kinship across borders. Mary Yuen analyses the labour migration in the globalization age, particularly the women migrant workers in Hong Kong. Following this, she offers some ethical reflections based on Catholic Social Teaching, especially in the light of the virtues of hospitality and solidarity. James Kanali argues that immigration controls increase the risks associated with migration. He discusses the concept of security framing and its ambivalence towards migrants. Reflecting on hospitality in a time of migration, Linh Hoang shows that migration is racialized. Following this, he examines the practice of hospitality within Christian community and how it can help change the situation of racism and poverty in the migration process. According to Linh Hoang, the ability to practice hospitality is a responsibility of every human person.

Riccardo Colasanti highlights one of the burning issues that undocumented migrants face, namely, the lack of healthcare. He also delineates the political, ethical and spiritual ideas behind the healthcare of migrants and presents a model for the healthcare of undocumented migrants. Colasanti calls for a solidarity based on mystical experience. Showing that modern economic models heighten exclusion and inequality, Charles Irudayam presents migration and poverty as “signs of the time.” Irudayam highlights the response of the Church, especially that of FABC, to the issue of migration and poverty. He underscores that “it is necessary always to see the migrant as a fellow human being, endowed with the same human dignity and rights as ourselves.” Sandie Cornish presents an overview of the response of CST and FABC to the issue of migration. She argues that “the phenomenon of migration is intrinsically intercultural thus CST at the international level needs to adopt an intercultural approach to it” and points out that FABC can contribute more to the development of CST as a more international and less Eurocentric body of teaching.

We also have two articles on other themes. Biju Karukappallil, discussing the socio-political and historical context of the first century Israel-Palestine, sheds light on uniqueness of the Kingdom message of Jesus. Luarence Culas, based on the Conciliar and Post-Conciliar documents, presents a magisterial theology of the ministry and life of priests.

Poverty is one of the root causes of migration; but, unfortunately, migration, in the present-day context, does not solve the problem of poverty, at least for many. The migrants continue to be discriminated — economically, culturally, socially, politically and so on. Thus, from economic poverty, they are thrown into various forms of poverty. Although we say that the world has become a global village, for millions of people, that is not the experience. They continue to be considered as aliens coming from a strange land, invading the security and comforts of the people of the land, and thus are discriminated and excluded from the mainstream society where they have newly settled. Can we dream of a world without borders? Can we dream of a global citizenship? The Christian vision of human society where everyone is a child of God, where everyone belongs to the same family, offers us such a dream; rather, it compels us to work towards realizing such a dream.

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