

PASTORAL CARE TO MIGRANTS

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Abstract

Today, migration is a prevalent and often discussed theme. Migration, both voluntary and forced, is increasing all over the world. Migration presently offers a major context for the Church's mission of evangelization and camaraderie with the migrants. The Scriptures depict Yahweh as the God of Migrants, and Jesus, who took the form of a human being, was also to present himself as a migrant from heaven who could guide migrants to heavenly Jerusalem. His Mystical Body by all means shall be an asylum for migrants and the members of the Church have a great responsibility of accepting the migrants and sharing the mission of spreading the Good News among them with a sense that these migrants also belong to the Kingdom of God. As pilgrims journeying towards the heavenly homeland, we should be more sympathetic to all people on the move today.

Keywords: Migration, Theology of Migration, Challenges, Mission, Call, Spiritual Care, Trust in God, Plan of God

1. Introduction

Migration is a sign of our times and it is not a new phenomenon. Migration has always been part of human history. Millions are on the

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move crossing the borders of culture and religion more than earlier. Castles and Miller rightly described our present time as an age of migration.¹ Migration has been a mostly prevalent and often discussed theme, though humans have been migrating ever since the origin of the human existence. Migration, both voluntary and forced, is increasing all over the world. Migration today forms a major context for the Church's mission of evangelization and solidarity with the poorest of the earth's poor. Migration normally took place in groups and as individuals in search of peace and freedom from war and conflict, to save themselves from hunger and poverty, to ensure new and better economic opportunities and occupation, to run off from religious fanaticism or political suppression, or even to trade and to travel to new places or countries. There are several types of migration such as internal migration, external migration, emigration, immigration, popular migration, impelled migration, step migration, chain migration, return migration, seasonal migration, etc.

Migration has been recognized as an enabler of human development that has empowered not only migrants and their families, but also the societies they have left and those that have received them. These gains hail the need for effective and cohesive governance of migration, to better harness the social and economic opportunities of human movement.² At the same time this also indicates that there is lack of development in a particular region and often migration takes place when the local government is incompetent to maintain the economic balance and internal peaceful co-existence. "The clash of cultures, identities, and religions, along with debates over economics, resources, and rights, has polarized public discourse, making the migration debate convoluted and confused".³ However, in this process of migration we find several kinds of people with various attitudes. One group that is ready to adapt to the new culture, bear the consequences and continue to live ignoring the external factors and focusing on the foreseen purposes of life. Another group being unable to adapt to the new culture continues to live in the new context of life. In both instances, there are several kinds of debasement of human

¹ S. Castles and MJ. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 2-3.

² United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, *International Migration and Development: Contributions and Recommendations of the International System* (2013), 7.

³ Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees", in *Theological Studies*, 70, 2009, 639.

dignity. Thus migration, we can say, is a process of conflict and cooperation, struggle and competition. The situation of the world's migrants and refugees also represents, said Pope John Paul II in 2003, "a vast field for the new evangelization to which the whole Church is called."⁴ Pope Francis has shown a sensitive heart towards the refugees and migrants and has entreated the leaders of the nations to welcome the refugees. To keep alive the faith of the migrants has to be essential responsibility of the Church. In deplorable conditions not only their social life, but their spiritual life is also challenged. Their harrowing stories are sorrowful to us. The unknown migratory pathways expose migrants to unimaginable painful realities. It is said: "Nothing that we produce as Theology will reach the migrant's hands in his/her journey to cross the border"⁵ However this article draws some contours of a theology of migration and may remind the followers of Christ to take up the mission of the pastoral care for the migrants.

2. Challenges

To begin with let us see a few challenges that these migrants face. Migration experience is often traumatic and unpredictable. Migrants fleeing their countries of origin rarely expect to encounter the worst hazards.

2.1. Anonymity

Migrant, being a more neutral term, has been used widely in all kinds of contexts. In our context we are familiar with the term 'refugee'. The word 'refugee' brings into our minds a faceless identity; we think of a refugee as an intruder, unassailing, conspirator, or to a great extent, as someone who can destroy our internal freedom and peace. Anonymity is painful and by being anonymous, one becomes all the more exasperating, because anonymous migrants are to bear all the accusations and ill treatment by the asylum provider. It maintains a distance between 'we' and 'they' and leaves them as two-dimensional figures or groups, known only by a label and a set of preformed, narrow narratives. The refugee is always looked down upon and is presented as a person at the mercy of others; one who is assailing at the border of a country, living in a temporary shelter- an unimaginably dirty ambience deprived even of proper food to fill the

⁴ John Paul II, "Address of Pope John Paul II," *People on the Move*, 35, 93, December, 2003: 9.

⁵ As quoted by Nico A Botha, "A theological perspective on migrants and migration focussing on the Southern African Development Community", in *Missionalia* 41:2 (August 2013) 104.

stomach. Today's media are never hesitant to telecast refugees in dehumanizing conditions. There are many people living without any identity and most of them are living with the UN identity card (in today's situation).

2.2. Animosity of the Inhabitants

Natives of the migrating country/region are the major ones who vehemently oppose migration. They are concerned with their own conferred interests. The reactions of the natives to the influx of migrants are always of hatred, aversion and animosity. There could be a feeling of insecurity in the minds of the natives that they would feel that their culture could be severely damaged, that their social security could be threatened, that their economic resources would have to be shared which could eventually lead to famine and scarcity of essential things and that their religious spirit could be wounded through the presence of the outcast migrants, etc. All these factors can definitely lead to hatred towards the migrants and so we see that everywhere there is protest against the decision to accept the migrants. Intolerance of otherness and prejudice towards migrants have been growing in recent years across the world, affecting the lives of refugees and migrants and posing a real threat to their security and human dignity. Flocking migrants in large number to a particular region/country can also cause a density of population which would indeed affect the demographic proportions. Cultural differences and religious backgrounds can also be other reasons for the hatred of the natives. In Germany people demand the government now to reverse their decision of accepting the refugees and integrating them. They want the refugees to go back to their own countries or to some African nations.

2.3. Aloneness and Sequestration

Human beings, as social beings, have always had the tendency to relate to people and desire their care, concern and recognition. When we are away from home and homeland, there is no guarantee that we will receive the same care, concern and love from other people. According to Manuel Carballo, "it must be assumed that all refugees have experienced trauma and that the choice to leave their home country was not their own".⁶ Loneliness and isolation are two miserable challenges that migrants have to face even today. Lonesomeness happens due to several reasons like loss of family and

⁶ Cf. Manuel Carballo, *Mental Health and Coping in a War Situation: The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *Journal of Biosocial Science*, Volume 36, Issue 4, July 2004, pp. 463 - 477.

friends, lack of social setups, language barriers, lack of access to services and resources, loss of status, loss of identity, loss of job or career, cultural differences, discrimination and stigma connected to being a foreigner, concerns related to food, shelter and healthcare, fear of getting infected by some contagious diseases and spreading the infection, loss of wages, isolating impact of government policies, etc. These challenges are inter-related and overlapping, trapping those who face them in a vicious circle and leading them into further isolation, loneliness and increasingly damaging their health. Feeling lonely is associated with increased mortality and a reduced quality of life.⁷ Psychological problems that are caused by isolation and loneliness are inevitable and their aftermaths are endless. To come out of those problems into normalcy depends on the policies of the nations and that would take an awful lot of time.

3. Theology of Migrants

Theology of Migrants has its foundation on the call to be neighbour and to exercise hospitality. Gloria L. Schaab has described this 'call to be neighbour' as "valid and unequivocal dimensions of a religious and spiritual basis for the immigration discussion."⁸ The Old Testament substantiates this view that the call is to welcome the stranger, because Israel itself had been a stranger/migrant (Dt.10:18-19). In Isaiah, there is discourse about social justice and inclusion (Is. 11:6-8), and about welcome, care, and solidarity towards the migrant (Is. 58:5-7).⁹ Throughout his ministry Jesus has proclaimed his special attention to and concern for the marginalized or those who were outside the Jewish tradition. In his teachings he presented gentiles as children of God and in his parables the migrants and the marginalised are the ones who practiced the Kingdom values (parable of the Good Samaritan). Delving into a little more detail on the basis of the Scripture in this regard would be meaningful.

3.1. *Yahweh*: The God of Migrants

The God of the Scriptures is the God of migrants. God the Father wished to be the Lord of migrants to be with humanity and intervened in the life of humanity. He is such a migrant who could migrate to

⁷ <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-refugees-migrants/>, accessed on 14 January, 2022.

⁸ Gloria L. Schaab, "Which of These Was Neighbour? Spiritual Dimensions of the US Immigration Question", in *International Journal of Public Theology* 2, No.2, 2008, 187.

⁹ Cf. Pauline Dimech, "A Theology of Migration: Mercy and Education", in *Melita Theologica: Journal of the Faculty of Theology*, University of Malta, 67/1, 2017, 136.

anywhere and anytime without the barriers of borders, cultures and socio-political spheres. “The Bible is a book written by migrants, for migrants and about migrants”.¹⁰ The first migration happened due to the sin of the first man and woman. Displacement to the land of hard work and sweat is to be understood as both a divine punishment and a path to purification, where the final destination is the lost homeland. According to the original plan, human beings do belong to the Garden of Eden and the whole human history would be in pursuit of a return to the land of their belonging.¹¹

The experience of migration left a decisive impression in the way ancient Israel interpreted its relationship with God, with neighbour and with creation, as well as in the way it understood its own identity. The constant assistance and accompaniment of *Yahweh* in the life of Israel during their exile, deportation and migration show that He is the God of migrants. He guides, shows the way, helps them find the means of livelihood and takes care of their spiritual needs as well. In fact, *Yahweh* gives prominence and visibility to the migrants, takes them out of anonymity, and dignifies them as people with a name and a royal tradition. The story of the eviction of Adam and Eve from their homeland, makes them the first to migrate, followed by Cain, who is destined to wander the world as a perpetual sojourner. This nomadic and pastoral lifestyle is a reflection of the early history of Israel. Moving further, besides the popular stories of Abraham and Jacob there are many more in the Old Testament where people migrate to other territories due to various reasons.

In Deuteronomy 10:19 we read, “You all must love the migrant,” and it also means, “You all will love the migrant.” God might be expected to speak of justice for the stranger, but instead God goes farther to commend love for the migrant. The Book of the Covenant in Exodus 20–23 forbids mistreating and oppressing the migrant (22:21; 23:9), but this passage goes farther, commanding and promising love.¹² When one translation uses “befriend” instead of “love,” it specifies the love for migrants in a way that is easier to imagine: Go and befriend

¹⁰ Elizangela Chaves Dias and Eduardo Pizzutti, *Migration in the Light of the Bible*, Rome: Scalabrini International Migration Institute, 2020, 5.

¹¹ Cf. On the Garden of Eden as the image of eternal paradise see Augustine of Hippo, *De Genesi ad litteram*, XII, 66-69.

¹² Patrick D. Miller, *Deuteronomy, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990, 126.

the migrant; I promise, you all will be enabled to befriend the migrant.¹³

The biblical narrator gives life and voice to migrants and those marginalized. It is not difficult to bring to mind that multitude of Egyptian refugees with whom God made a covenant and who became the chosen people (Ex. 12,38); Agar, woman, foreign slave, refugee, single mother, expelled from the house of Abraham and Sarah, to whom God speaks and makes a promise similar to the promise of Abraham (Gen. 16 and 21); Shiphrah and Puah, the foreign midwives who saved the lives of the newborn Hebrew children (Ex. 1,15-22); Ruth, the Moabite immigrant, wife, widow, foreigner, who became David's great-grandmother; Esther, the poor foreign orphan girl, who becomes queen and the saviour of her people; Jonah, the prophet called to proclaim God's judgment in a foreign land; Jeremiah's letter to exiles which motivated them to seek the peace (shalom) of the country of immigration (Jr. 29.4-7,10;14).¹⁴

The abovementioned examples are not exhaustive. The deportations and exiles eventually led to migratory expansions into the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period, and later to the west and Italy in the mid-second century BCE.¹⁵ The theme of migration continues to serve as a setting for the biblical narration of salvation history. However, we can say that the Biblical narratives about the migrants also tell us that they were always accompanied by Yahweh, and Yahweh is the Lord and God of Migrants.

3.2. Jesus: The Migrant

Christ the Second Person of Trinity came to this world as a Divine Migrant to establish the truth that we are all migrants and our destiny is the heavenly Jerusalem, where there is a Father who loves every migrant on this earth. "The language of John's Gospel depicts Jesus as undertaking a cosmological migration, moving from the heavenly realm to the worldly, where he "tented" (*eskēnōsen*)".¹⁶ Perhaps the love of the *Yahweh* for Israel is better understood in the person of Jesus; because just as Jesus came from heaven with the Trinitarian love that

¹³ Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, 66.

¹⁴ Elizangela Chaves Dias and Eduardo Pizzutti, *Migration in the Light of the Bible*, Rome: Scalabrini International Migration Institute, 2020, 6.

¹⁵ Peter C. Phan, "Migration in the Patristic Era: History and Theology," in *A Promised Land, a Perilous Journey*, (eds.), Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 39.

¹⁶ Gilberto Ruiz, "A Migrant Being at Work: Movement and Migration in Johannine Christology," in *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology 2011*, <http://latinotheology.org/2011/migrant-worker-migration>, accessed on 14 October 2023.

is all pervasive he also went beyond the segregations of the society to show that the Heavenly Father is not only the Father of Israel alone, but also the Father of all humankind. Jesus dwelt in the region of Galilee, went through the experience of migration (Mt. 2) and lived as a pilgrim (Mt. 8:20). The Evangelist John accentuates the dimension of his strangeness because He came “from above” (Jn. 8:23), even though in Jesus’ words this identification appears only once.¹⁷

The Gospels present Jesus as a wanderer who went about doing good. He spoke for the marginalized and was a friend of the migrants. Invariably all “the four Gospels portray Jesus as an itinerant preacher who has no place to lay his head (Lk. 9:58), and whose ministry is characterized as a journey to a homeland beyond Jerusalem (Lk. 9:51)”.¹⁸ Many marginalized people approached him for healing and physical needs; but he with the inclusive and unfathomable love of the Father took care of their spiritual needs as well and promised them membership in the Kingdom of God. He made all efforts to bring back the migrants who were migrants to the love of the Father. He crossed the borders of the gentiles and passed by the areas of lepers and demoniacs. He could break the barriers of the society and considered the Israelites and gentiles equally though He was criticised for the same. He touched the hearts of those who lost the sense of touch. He identified himself with the migrants put himself into their shoes. He praised the gentiles for their faith in Him amidst the Israelites. He appreciated their dignity and migrants appreciated his magnanimity. Thus, Jesus became a migrant and a sponsor simultaneously. “In other words, Jesus did not merely minister to the rejected and marginalized, he was one of the rejected and marginalized”.¹⁹ For the mission Christ wants all his followers accept the vocation to be migrants. He sends disciples in pairs to farther places with authority to preach the Good News. He warns them of the hurdles on their way and instructs them to accept the hardships as essential parts of discipleship. His final instruction to the disciples was also to go to the corners of the world and proclaim the message of love. Hence, Jesus who came from heaven

¹⁷ Elizangela Chaves Dias and Eduardo Pizzutti, *Migration in the Light of the Bible*, 13.

¹⁸ Donald Senior, “‘Beloved Aliens and Exiles’: New Testament Perspectives on Migration,” in *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey*, (eds.), Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008, 21.

¹⁹ Kathleen Philipps, *Hospitality and Emerging Populations: Toward a Theology of Migration in the Context of the Catholic Church in the United States*, (PhD Thesis) Toronto: University of St. Micheal’s College, 2015, 117.

as a migrant tells us that we are all migrants here and that our identity as followers of Christ is eternal.

3.3. A Church for the Migrants

A static Church fails to fully live the reality of the Church. The Church needs to be “on the way,” which means open and engaging with new and different peoples, cultures, and traditions. The Church can learn such an ethic from migrants who know what it means to be on the move. To the followers of Jesus, migration should not be seen as a cause for division, but as an opportunity to enlarge ourselves as a single human family. Christian followers cannot put up boundaries with their fellow beings and that has to be the hallmark of Christians. “The Judeo-Christian tradition and Catholic social teaching call persons of faith to work to safeguard the rights of migrants and newcomers, including those who entered the country illegally or who otherwise lack immigration status.”²⁰ The position of the Church regarding migrants is to give priority to human dignity and human rights and to value them even if the civil law stands against them. Migrant care is truly faithful to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. Migrant care is an ongoing action of the Church as she engages in a process of ‘scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel’.²¹ During his visit to USA in 2015, Pope Francis said:

Thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.²²

Reflection on mission in the context of migration suggests that it might be carried out in two ways. On the one hand, the Church’s mission is to help migrants—that is, migrants should be the objects of the Church’s pastoral care. On the other hand, however, the Church’s mission is for migrants—that is, the migrants in our midst are the subjects of mission. They both call the local Church to new ways of being Church and they themselves need to be active within the Church,

²⁰ Judith Gans, Elaine M. Replogle, Daniel J. Tichenor, (eds.), *Debates on U.S. Immigration*, Los Angeles: SAGE Publication, 2012, 429.

²¹ *Gaudium et Spes*, 4.

²² <http://faith.nd.edu/s/1210/faith/interior.aspx?sid=1210&gid=609&pgid=41467>, accessed on 17 October, 2023.

serving the Church within and outside of their own communities, and serving the wider world as well. Today, there is a growing literature in this relatively new area of missiological reflection and practice.²³ The Instruction promulgated by the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People in 2004, *Erga Migrante Caritas Christi*, intends to provide a "... specific biblico-theological frame of reference, incorporating the migration phenomenon into the history of salvation, as a sign of the times and of the presence of God in history and in the community of peoples, directed to universal communion".²⁴

The state laws may stand for justice, but the Christian spirit shall stand for mercy regarding the migrants. The Church shall be an asylum for all kinds of people and then it will become Catholic or all inclusive. The spirit of mercy is essential to have that character of "all inclusive". All our theological, religious, and spiritual values ought to be fuelled by mercy, and the migrants ought to be the object of our mercy. Mercy is a necessary countermeasure to the unrelenting harshness of civil law today. "The lack of procedural and substantive protections for migrants, the acceptance of unfettered discretion and lack of oversight of agency action, and the political subordination of noncitizens all push in the same direction - towards sovereign mercy rather than equitable justice".²⁵

4. Responses to the Challenges

The first part of this paper enumerated a few challenges that the migrants have been facing. In the background of the reflection, we made on the basis of the Scripture a few responses to the challenges are:

4.1. Defining the Identity

One of the major struggles that migrants face is anonymity. When one migrates to another nation/region, it is not just the physique that leaves the native land but rather the whole self and hence the identity as well. As migrants they are stranded, stay away from the region/country of origin, and arrive in a totally new region/country

²³ Cf. Gioacchino Campese and Pietro Ciallella, (eds.), *Migration, Religious Experience, and Globalization*, New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2003. See also Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese, (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008.

²⁴ Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*:Vatican: Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 2004, introduction.

²⁵ Allison Brownell Tirres, "Mercy in Immigration Law", in *Brigham Young University Law Review*, No.6, 2014, 1563.

which in no way is prepared to welcome the strangers. Hosting the stranger is a virtue, however, it is a living existential struggle – a struggle with crucial implications. There, the identity of the migrants is questioned, challenged, discussed and degraded. However, the identity of the migrant is the identity of ‘Christian’. Those who follow Christ are known everywhere as Christians and hence the identity of the migrants is the identity of the Christians. Then there arises a question regarding those belonging to other religions. According to the teachings of Christ all are children of the one and same Father and hence they too are our own sisters and brothers. Secondly, we are all created in the image and likeness of God. Defining all human beings in terms of *imago Dei* provides a very different starting point for the discourse on migration and creates a very different trajectory²⁶ for the discussion. Lisa Sowle Cahill notes that the image of God is “the primary Christian category or symbol of interpretation of personal value”.²⁷ “[This] symbol,” Mary Catherine Hilker adds, “grounds further claims to human rights” and “gives rise to justice”.²⁸ Benedict XVI says, “Every migrant is a human person who, as such, possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance”.²⁹ Hence, without losing their self-identity and self-esteem, migrants can present their faces as children of God and as followers of Christ.

4.2. Trust in God

Trust in God in situations such as migration and times of pain is a challenge. However, as people who are created in the image and likeness of God and as children of the Father we need to look into the Scriptures and traditions of the Church where God intervened in the life of humanity during the time of migration, whether natural or forced. The various personalities in the Bible inspire us to trust in God in the struggles of migration. God’s intervention as we learn from the Bible tells us that any migration should not be understood as outside of God’s hand. The life of Joseph the son of Jacob, mentioned in the

²⁶ Cf. Daniel G. Groody, C.S.C., “Crossing the Divide: Foundations of A Theology of Migration and Refugees”, in *Theological Studies*, 70, 2009, 638-667.

²⁷ Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Toward a Christian Theory of Human Rights”, *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 8, 1980, 279.

²⁸ Mary Catherine Hilker, “Cry Beloved Image: Rethinking the Image of God”, in *In the Embrace of God: Feminist Approaches to Theological Anthropology*, (ed.), Ann O’Hara Graff: Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1995, 193.

²⁹ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate: Encyclical on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009, 62.

book of Genesis tells us the same. There were several kinds of struggles and hurdles Joseph had to face during his unprecedented travel towards an unknown land; however, he managed to take up all the challenges trusting in the providence of God. That is what we learn from his life that he encountered the eventualities of his life not having properly understood them, but rather he was strengthened by God because he had boundless trust in the providence of God. In most of the notations, he is depicted as a man full of crises-sometimes internal crisis, but mostly external crisis. He understood that the troubles and trials in life are tools in the hand of God to mould us, shape us, and make of us something beyond our imagination. God changed his troubles into triumphs because Joseph let God perform his work in him. Even though his life struggled at times, he had the courage to trust God despite difficult circumstances. Migrants are brought to some people's doorsteps by God, for purposes that are unknown to them. Given this, the individual and corporate factors for migration that are associated with pain and tears, should not be viewed solely from a human perspective. Instead, migration should also be perceived as God's providential control over everything that has to do with human beings, as he works out his plan to fulfil his promises.³⁰ Pope Francis says, "No one must be excluded. God's plan is essentially inclusive and gives priority to those living on the existential peripheries. Among them are many migrants and refugees, displaced persons, and victims of trafficking. The Kingdom of God is to be built with them, for without them it would not be the Kingdom that God wants".³¹

5. Conclusion

Christian mission is a movement of the people of God in their contexts. Population movements have always accompanied demographic growth, technological change, political conflict and warfare. Over the last five centuries, mass migrations have played a major role in colonialism, industrialisation, the emergence of nation-states and the development of the capitalist world market.³² It is discouraged by many because migration brings mostly a new world disorder. It affects more and more countries and regions, and its

³⁰ Christopher Magezi, "Towards Understanding Migration within God's Redemptive Plan for Humankind: A case of Matthew's Genealogy in Connection with the Old Testament", in *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 41(1), a2014. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v41i1.2014>, accessed on 30 October, 2023.

³¹ Pope Francis, *Message for the 108th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2022.

³² Stephen Castles Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration*, London: Palgrave, 1998, 283.

linkages with complex processes affect the entire world. However, from the salvation history of humankind it is clear that God has been revealing Himself to the chosen people and He wanted them to move from one place to the other and, as part of that, those generations had to go through deportation, exile, exodus, dispersion, slavery, etc. On the part of the one who surrenders oneself to the will of God, migration is according to the plan of God for the establishment of the will of God. Ultimately, whoever is born on this earth are migrants – migrants in search of Christ and his Kingdom. As pilgrims of faith, Christians are spiritual migrants searching for a true homeland, an identity that should make us more sympathetic to all people on the move today. Jesus says, the Kingdom of God is within us and it is filled with justice, love and peace. And if so the migrants shall not lose hope but rather trust in the Lord and believe that the Lord God is the God of migrants and each one of us as wanderers on this earth will find a permanent residence in His Kingdom.