

# World Day of Migrants and Refugees

## PRAYER GUIDE AND SPIRITUAL ITINERARY



**God walks  
with His  
People**

*This prayer guide is adopted from "God walks with His People: Suggestions for a step-by-step itinerary to do together toward World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2024" You can also draw on the testimonies of people you've met, invite migrants ...*

Opening Video: [God walks with His people – Pope Francis' appeal](#)

### 1ST STAGE: TOWARDS THE TRUE HOMELAND

#### 1st Reader:

**« Our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ » (Phil 3:20).**

#### 2nd reader:

"The People of God [is] journeying through history on pilgrimage, "migrating", we could say, toward the Kingdom of Heaven. The biblical narrative of Exodus, depicting the Israelites on their way to the promised land, naturally comes to mind: a long journey from slavery to freedom [...].

Likewise, it is possible to see in the migrants of our time, as in those of every age, a living image of God's people on their way to the eternal homeland." - *Pope Francis, Message for WDMR2024*

#### Testimony: 'It is thanks to God we survived': a refugee's story

Barnabé Anzuruni, who leads Tearfund's work with churches in East and Central Africa, reflects on how his time as a refugee gives him a passion for equipping churches to help others.

I was born a refugee in Burundi, as my parents fled the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Our family moved back to the DRC due to violence in Burundi, but conflict forced us to relocate again to Tanzania. For over 30 years, I lived as a refugee, enduring poverty in camps without water or electricity. Despite these hardships, I am grateful for my experiences, as they shaped my role at Tearfund, where I work with local churches to help others lift themselves out of poverty. I've witnessed the transformative power of community engagement. For instance, in Mutaho, Burundi, church leaders collaborated with the community to build additional classrooms for a school that previously had only three. In another area, our partners helped families establish banana plantations, enabling them to pay for their children's education and meet other basic needs. I believe that true development comes from empowering communities rather than just providing handouts.

My own journey from being seen as a nobody because of my refugee status to recognizing my worth has fueled my passion to help others. I know firsthand what it feels like to be an asylum seeker and an undocumented migrant, but through it all, God held me in His hand. Now, I dedicate my life to helping others find their path out of poverty, inspired by the grace I've received.

(<https://www.tearfund.org/stories/2021/06/its-thanks-to-god-we-survived>)



**As they say: we are all in transit;  
we are all in the same boat.**

Song: [Immigrant's Song – Keith & Kristyn Getty ft. Jordyn Shellhart](#)

## 2ND STAGE: GOD WALKS WITH US

### 1st Reader:

**« The Lord your God goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you »** (Deut 31:6).

### 2nd reader:

"The fundamental reality of the Exodus, of every exodus, is that God precedes and accompanies his people and all his children in every time and place. [...]"

Many migrants experience God as their traveling companion, guide and anchor of salvation. They entrust themselves to him before setting out and seek him in times of need. In him, they find consolation in moments of discouragement. Thanks to him, there are good Samaritans along the way. In prayer, they confide their hopes to him." - *Pope Francis, Message for WDMR2024*

### Testimony: One Small Step to Change the World: A Russian Stylist Finds New Purpose in Poland

Ekaterina, a 29-year-old stylist originally from Saint Petersburg, Russia, found herself in Krakow, Poland, when the war in Ukraine escalated in February 2022. Distressed by the violence and destruction shown on television, her thoughts turned to her family in Ukraine, particularly her three brothers and grandmother. On the night of February 23, she went to bed anxious and woke up to the reality of war.

In response to the crisis, Ekaterina paused her successful career in fashion to help those affected by the conflict. With a law degree in hand, she began volunteering and eventually secured a position with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Her role involves assessing the needs of Ukrainian refugees, providing vital information that aids humanitarian efforts.



Despite concerns about potential discrimination due to her Russian nationality, Ekaterina has experienced only support from those around her in Poland. She expresses contentment with her new life in Krakow and enjoys her work, even appreciating local cuisine like zurek. Although she misses her family, she remains hopeful for a future reunion and believes that the war will eventually come to an end.

<https://www.iamamigrant.org/stories/ekaterina>

**We recognize God's presence at our side, "I am not alone".**

Song: ["Walk with you" – Michael Bethany](#)

## 3RD STAGE: GOD WALKS WITHIN US

### 1st Reader:

**« I have moved from tent to tent and from dwelling to dwelling »** (1 Cr 17:5).

### 2nd reader:

"The tent is a form of presence especially dear to the Lord. During David's reign, God chose to dwell in a tent, not a temple, so that he could walk with his people. [...] God not only walks with his people, but also within them, in the sense that he identifies himself with men and women on their journey through history, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalized. In this we see an extension of the mystery of the Incarnation." - *Pope Francis, Message for WDMR2024*

## Testimony: Even After 15 Years Away, Iraq is Always Home

As you approach Aween Factory in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq, the sounds of sewing machines and Kurdish chatter fill the air. Ibrahim Mohammed Amin, 42, stands at the entrance, surrounded by fabric and finished Kurdish attire, radiating passion for his work.



Ibrahim's early life was shaped by conflict, born during the Iran-Iraq war and later facing the Iraqi Kurdish Civil War. At 15, he fled Iraq due to instability, relying on smugglers and taking various jobs across five countries to survive. Despite the challenges, Iraq remained his home in his heart.

After 15 years abroad, he returned in 2010 upon hearing the country was stabilizing. He established an import and resale business, sourcing ready-made clothes from Turkey and China to sell back home.

<https://www.iamamigrant.org/stories/ibrahim>



Song: [Declaración de domicilio, Cristóbal Fones, SJ](#)

## 4TH STAGE: I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

### 1st Reader:

**«Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me » (Mt 25:40).**

### 2nd reader:

"The encounter with the migrant, as with every brother and sister in need, "is also an encounter with Christ. He himself said so. It is he who knocks on our door, hungry, thirsty, an outsider, naked, sick and imprisoned, asking to be met and assisted" [...]

Every encounter along the way represents an opportunity to meet the Lord; it is an occasion charged with salvation, because Jesus is present in the sister or brother in need of our help. In this sense, the poor save us, because they enable us to encounter the face of the Lord." - Pope Francis, Message for WDMR2024

## Testimony: Jean - 5,100KM of courage

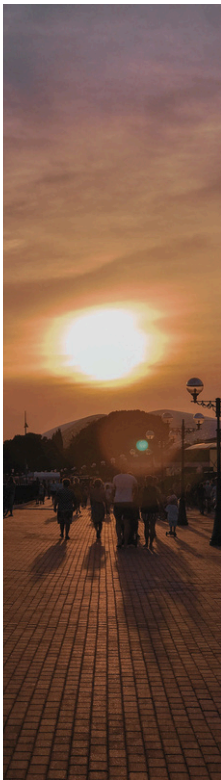


Jean, a Civil Engineering student from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, experienced a life-changing event in 2010 when he was evacuated to Recife, Brazil, following the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Although he had often watched Brazilian military planes land from his apartment window, boarding one of those planes marked a significant transition in his life. He recalls the anxiety of leaving his home country during such a crisis.

Initially intimidated by the language barrier, Jean has since adapted and is now focused on contributing to Haiti's development. He runs a geotechnics company that specializes in soil and subsoil studies and is also involved in oil and gas research. Currently, he is pursuing a PhD in Civil Engineering, driven by a desire to enhance education and technology in Haiti. Jean's journey reflects resilience and a commitment to helping his homeland despite the challenges he faced after relocating.

<https://www.iamamigrant.org/stories/jean>

Song: [I have arrived, I am home - Plum village song](#)



## PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2024

**God, Almighty Father,  
we are your pilgrim Church  
journeying towards the Kingdom of heaven.  
We live in our homeland,  
but as if we were foreigners.  
Every foreign place is our home,  
yet every native land is foreign to us.  
Though we live on earth,  
our true citizenship is in heaven.  
Do not let us become possessive  
of the portion of the world  
you have given us as a temporary home.**

**Help us to keep walking,  
together with our migrant brothers and sisters,  
toward the eternal dwelling you have prepared for us.  
Open our eyes and our hearts  
so that every encounter with those in need  
becomes an encounter with Jesus, your Son and our Lord.  
Amen.**

***Pope Francis***

### For World Migrants' Day, you can watch these movies on migration



#### **“Lo capitano”**

is based on an original idea by director Matteo Garrone. The script is based on the true stories of emigration from Africa to Europe.



#### **“The Old Oak”**

A 2023 film by Ken Loach, about the last pub in a mining village in Northeast England, where Syrian refugees arrive and face hostility. The film follows the landlord, the refugees, and their interactions with the community and the pub.



#### **La jaula de oro: (The Golden Dream):**

A 2013 Mexican drama directed by Diego Quemada-Díez, focusing on the harrowing journey of three Guatemalan teenagers—Juan, Sara, and Samuel—who seek a better life in the United States. But, as they travel on freight trains or along railroad tracks, they will have to face a harsh and violent reality...



#### **“Nous trois ou rien”**

Based on a true story. It explores themes of family love, self-sacrifice, and the pursuit of communal harmony. It is characterized as a universal tale that balances humor with poignant reflections on identity and belonging.

*Praying together for our Blessed and Broken World*



JPIC LEARNING HUB  
2024