

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS AND ITINERANT PEOPLE

KENYAN BISHOPS' COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND SEAFARERS

(Nairobi, 2nd – 5th June 2008)

APPEAL of NAIROBI

1. We the participants to the first Congress of delegates from National and Regional Episcopal Conferences of Africa involved in the pastoral care of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, gathered in Nairobi June 2-5, 2008, have reflected upon the following theme: Towards a better pastoral care for Migrants and Refugees in Africa at the dawn of the Third Millennium.
2. The phenomenon of migration is a structural incontrovertible reality. Some people are forced into it, others freely choose it in the pursuit of better living conditions. Unfortunately, every form of mobility entails a great deal of suffering, grave inconveniences deeply affecting people like, for instance, painful abandonment and separations within families and communities. These disturbing consequences reach an even deeper degree of severity among the refugees and displaced persons, forced, as they are, to leave their natural environment, oftentimes abandoning family, native country, and their possessions. No African country is immune from this challenging sign of the times.
3. We believe that the specific assistance demanded by migrants, refugees, by those who fall victims in the trade of human beings, by the homeless, must be a pastoral care without boundaries. The most apt instruments to make it happen can be found only through the cooperation and solidarity of all local Churches involved. Keeping in mind the millions of displaced persons in Africa, it isn't hard to imagine the number of Churches effected by the migration phenomenon and its consequences.
4. The Catholic Church was, and still is, very near to every person touched by migration. She is worried about the defenceless and more precisely about the children and the women, victims of various forms of human traffic. Considering the enormous sufferings caused by migration, the Church God's Family must increase her efforts and the scope of her Christian charity in the performance of the specific pastoral care on behalf of human mobility. Every local Church must make this concern its own.
5. We feel confident to appeal about this to the international community. In all urgency and as soon as possible, it must do all in its power to improve the economic conditions that today are forcing millions of people to hit the road in search of better living conditions.

6. We call upon all political leaders and those responsible for the economic policies, both at the national and the international level. We beg them to constantly watch over the common good, national and universal, and also over social justice. Isn't it precisely the survival of peoples that confers them their reason to be? This is why it is indispensable that they find the best ways to stabilize the socio-economic relations among nations in order that every human being be allowed to develop in his/her own country without being compelled to migrate. However, considering also that every person has the right to migrate, under certain conditions, we ask that each person be assured an adequate reception.
7. We call upon, with devoted confidence, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI that he may continue to be spokesperson for, and the courageous defender, of all victims of migration. We ask also the Bishops themselves to be the intrepid defenders of the human rights, and we entrust them with the task of organizing both the humanitarian assistance and the pastoral care (*cura animarum*) inspired by a holistic conception of the human person. May they pay careful attention to the formation of their co-operators and of all pastoral agents who, with them, will resolutely engage themselves in a witness of love and self giving on behalf of the migrants, refugees and every displaced person. They shall not spare any sacrifice if they can improve concrete situations and secure their indispensable support to the brothers and sisters in need.
8. It is the duty of the whole Church God's Family, to intensify the respectful dialogue with the migrants, as requested by the Instruction *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, and to be on the look out that nobody be cast off. She must also develop this same dialogue with Sisters Churches and Ecclesial Communities in order to face together the new challenges provided by migration. This same dialogue must be extended to all religions in order to establish a base for the co-operation with every person of good will who is engaged in the building of a society that is open and receptive to the alien.
9. To all persons wounded by human mobility we address this message of hope and love: we are all brothers (Matt 23:8) in the name of Christ who made us a "Holy Nation" (1Pt 2:9) and who commanded us to love one another. It is our vision of faith. We invite them all to take a stand for the defence of their own rights and dignity in truth and justice, and to contribute to the betterment of life conditions for themselves and for every person in the perspective of a just integration.
10. We entrust to God our Father all the resolutions and recommendations that are coming out of this first Congress of delegates from National and Regional Episcopal Conferences of Africa involved in the pastoral care of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons organized by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. We offer to His divine Omnipotence all the efforts that all men and women concerned by the reality of human mobility will undertake.

May Mary, Star of Hope, be on all circumstances the helper and the advocate of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons!

Nairobi, June 5th, 2008