

STARTING AFRESH FROM CHRIST.
TOWARDS A RENEWED PASTORAL CARE FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**Fifth World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees
Rome, 17 - 22 November 2003**

FINAL DOCUMENT

PART I. THE EVENT

1. The 5th World Congress for the Pastoral Care of Migrants¹ and Refugees² assembled 319 delegates and observers from 84 countries. These included Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, priests, pastoral agents, men and women of various religious congregations, ecclesial movements and lay associations, Fraternal Delegates from the Anglican Communion, the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the World Council of Churches, Ambassadors and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions accredited to the Holy See, members of international and non-governmental organizations, experts in relevant academic fields, as well as representatives of associations, movements and organizations that are directly or indirectly concerned with migrants and refugees.
2. The Congress opened with a Eucharistic concelebration in the Basilica of St. Peter, presided over by Card. Stephen Fumio Hamao, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (PCMIP). Highlight of the daily sessions, in fact, was the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, presided over, on the subsequent days, by Cardinal-Members of the PCMIP or Presidents of Episcopal Commissions for Migrants and Refugees (Cardinal Georg Sterzinsky, Archbishop of Berlin; Bishop Adriano Langa, President of the Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Itinerant People of Mozambique; Cardinal Pedro Rubiano Saenz, Archbishop of Bogota; Cardinal Jean Baptiste Pham Minh Man, Archbishop of Thành-Phô Hồ Chi Minh and President of the Episcopal Commission for Migrants and Refugees of Vietnam). The daily celebrations were animated by the songs and other forms of participation by migrant groups of various nationalities.
3. The Opening Session started with the warm welcome of the PCMIP Cardinal-President, followed by the welcome addresses of Sen. Antonio D'Alí, Undersecretary of the Italian Ministry of the Interior; Hon. Maria Pia Garavaglia, Vice-Mayor of the City of Rome; and Dr. Marco Buttarelli, Chief of Cabinet of the President of the Lazio Region. Cardinal Hamao then gave an overview of the program explaining the choice of the theme: "Starting afresh from Christ. Towards a new pastoral care of migrants and refugees." The Church cannot remain indifferent in the wake of the present plight of migrants and refugees. She wants to share their joys and grief, there where they are, and be with them in their search for a better and safer life, worthy of being children of God.
4. Unlike the Congress that preceded it, which examined more closely the socio-economic and political aspects of the migration phenomenon, the present Congress concentrated primarily on

¹ Where applicable, migrants include seasonal workers and foreign students.

² Where applicable, refugees include asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

the pastoral aspects and renewed in Christ the pastoral programmes in favor of migrants and refugees for the coming years.

5. To examine today's challenges among migrants and refugees, Dr. Gabriela Rodriguez, United Nations Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants, discussed the present situation of international migration world-wide. She made the assembly aware of the fact that although a wide framework of international laws is set up to protect the human rights of migrants, be their position "regular" or "irregular", these human rights are often not implemented. Prof. Stefano Zamagni, President of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), spoke on the present situation of refugees in the world. He called attention to Africa, where one third of the world's refugee population lives. It also accounts for 60% of Internally Displaced Persons (2.5% of the African population). He stated that more finances and time should be devoted to this situation to avoid the creation of explosive situations. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop of Washington and Member of the PCMIP, then pointed out the pastoral challenges that the world of migrants and refugees puts before us. After reading his text, the Cardinal concluded by saying that an encyclical letter on migration would be welcome.
6. At a round table presentation, a representative from each of the five continents illustrated a more detailed regional picture of the phenomenon of migrants and refugees. Bishop León Tharmaraj, President of the Office for Human Development of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences spoke for Asia and the Pacific. Rev. Anthony McGuire, outgoing Director of the Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, presented North America, while Bishop Jacyr Francisco Braido, Chairman of the Section on Human Mobility of the Latin American Episcopal Council, discussed the situation in Latin America. Africa was discussed by Rev. Abraham Okoko Esseau, S.J., National Coordinator of the Commission for Migrants and Refugees of the Episcopal Conference of the Republic of Congo, whereas the situation in Europe was exposed by Msgr. Aldo Giordano, Secretary General of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences.
7. Faced with the challenges of our times, the Holy Father stated in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, Jesus Christ. Thus the Congress *started afresh from Christ*, first by examining society and culture according to the vision of the Church, and also by recalling its teaching regarding human mobility. Cardinal Paul Poupard, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, spoke on the first aspect. He underlined that a given culture is not truly human until it contains openness towards other cultures and to the universal. The second aspect was presented by the Secretary of the PCMIP, Archbishop Agostino Marchetto, who analyzed the teaching of the Church after the Second Vatican Council and future prospects. The Church's vision and guidelines for ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, specifically in relation to the world of human mobility, were presented respectively by Cardinal Walter Kasper, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, and by Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue.
8. The Christian view was enriched with statements of the Fraternal Delegates. The Anglican Communion was represented by His Grace Ian George, Archbishop of Adelaide, Australia; the Ecumenical Patriarchate's Delegate was Metropolitan Emmanuel of France of the Office of the Orthodox Church to the European Union; and the World Council of Churches was represented by Ms. Doris Peschke, General Secretary of the Commission on Migrants in Europe. Unfortunately, the Delegate from the Lutheran World Federation, Rev. Willy S. Haag of the Church of Sweden, in Rome, could not be present for health reasons. Their active participation

is a hope for an increasing ecumenical collaboration in the sectors of migrants and refugees that will contribute to the realization of full unity among Christians.

9. The reflections were rendered vital and concrete by the experiences of the participants in the round table presentation that followed. Bishop Josef Voss, President of the Commission on Migration of the Episcopal Conference of Germany, shared the Commission's experience among migrants and refugees in Germany, while Sr. Valeria Rubin, Coordinator of the "Enfants d'Aujourd'hui, Monde de Demain" Association, spoke on the inter-religious experience in Marseille. Mr. José Zepeda, Director of the Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Australia, presented the life and activities of the Centre and Fr. Michael Ryan, pastor of Our Lady of Hope Parish in Moscow, talked about the situation of his multi-ethnic parish and its migrant community.
10. The Congress also *started afresh from Christ* by staking everything on charity, considering the stupendous page of Christology in the Gospels, when Christ identifies himself with the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, the prisoner, the suffering, the marginalized... Yet, this page also means that "no one can be excluded from our love, since 'through his Incarnation the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every person'" (GS 22, NMI 49). With this in mind, there is a reason to dream of a new world.
11. Reflections on how to *start afresh from Christ* for a more Christian world, in the light of the Sacred Scriptures, were given by Fr. Albert Vanhoye, SJ, Professor *emeritus* at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, whereas Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, outgoing President of SECAM, discussed *starting afresh from Christ* for a more fraternal and welcoming world in solidarity. Finally, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, outgoing Secretary for State Relations of the Secretariat of State, unable to attend, delegated Msgr. Pietro Parolin, Undersecretary, to read his text on *starting afresh from Christ* for a more just, free and peaceful world.
12. The aforementioned reflections were rendered dynamic by the testimonies. Dr. Aldo Morrone spoke of the medical services given to migrants and refugees in Rome at the Department of Preventive Medicine of Migration, Tourism and Tropical Dermatology of the "Santa Maria e San Gallicano" Hospital, which he directs. Sr. Janete Aparecida Ferreira shared the experiences of the Welcome Centre for Migrants in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where she formerly served as Executive Secretary of the Commission for Migration of the country's Episcopal Conference. From Beirut, Fr. Martin J. McDermott, SJ, Coordinator of the Committee on the Pastoral Care of Afro-Asian Migrant Workers in Lebanon, relayed the life and activities of the Center. The African experience of Jesuit Refugee Services was shared by Sr. Anne Elizabeth Vuyst, SSMN, from JRS Lilongwe, Malawi, while the work that the Fountain of Life Centre in Pattaya City, Thailand, carries out among trafficked women was witnessed by Sr. M. Supaporn Chotiphol, RGS.
13. Since it is impossible to *start afresh from Christ* without contemplating the mystery of the Holy Eucharist and considering the importance of Liturgy, Cardinal Geraldo Majella Agnelo, Archbishop of São Salvador da Bahia, in Brazil, spoke on the "Eucharist as Bread and Word of Life, Our Hope," while Bishop Renato Ascencio León, President of the Mexican Episcopal Commission for Human Mobility, presented it as the sign and instrument of the unity of the whole Christian community. On his part, Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Malines-Bruxelles, reflected on the Eucharist as the seed, the promise and the assurance of new heavens and new earth.

14. Related to various aspects of the Eucharist, Mr. Zenel Elshani, ICMC Project Director in the Balkans, witnessed about the elements leading to the civil war in Kosovo, recalling events from his own life and his activities in ICMC programs for reconciliation. Bishop Ramon Argüelles, Chairman of the Commission for Migrants and Itinerant People of the Episcopal Conference of the Philippines spoke of concrete cooperation solicited and established with the Churches in the countries to where Filipino men and women migrate. The participants also heard of the experiences in celebrating the Sunday Eucharist with the use of various languages in the Assumption Parish of Houston, from Fr. Italo Dell'Oro, CRS, its former Parish Priest, and on human promotion among refugees in the Republic of Guinea from Mr. Robert Tédouno, Assistance Programme Director of "Organisation Catholique pour la Promotion Humaine" in the country.
15. The Sessions were chaired on the different days by the Cardinal President of the PCMIP, its Cardinal-Members (Cardinal Adam Joseph Maida, Archbishop of Detroit and Cardinal Aloysius Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto) and Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, with whom the PCMIP has a long tradition of collaboration. Archbishop Agostino Marchetto and Fr. Michael A. Blume, Secretary and Undersecretary of the PCMIP, moderated the morning and afternoon sessions respectively.
16. Fourteen workshops met daily thus giving all participants the possibility to speak about their experiences in the field of migration and refuge, to express their thoughts, hopes and expectations and their suggestions for future plans of action.
17. On Wednesday, 19th of November, in the evening, the Congress participants visited the Sistine Chapel, through the courtesy of the Vatican Museums, while on Thursday evening, 20th of November, a "Festa dei Popoli", a festival of songs, dances and other presentations of various migrant groups in Rome, connected with *Migrantes*, of the Italian Episcopal Conference, was offered to the participants.
18. The culminating point of the Congress was the Audience with the Holy Father on Thursday morning, 20th of November. His encouraging and enlightening words were an important support to the work in favour of migrants and refugees.

PART II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Keynote speeches, statements, round tables, and working groups enabled the participants of the Congress to make an inventory of the present situation of migrants and refugees all over the world taking into account global, regional, and local specificities. On this basis, the Congress, *starting afresh from Christ* in the light of the Sacred Scriptures, whose heart is love, with special attention given to the Eucharist, dealt with various challenges concerning the vision of the Church on migrants and refugees. At the same time, it considered the pastoral care of the Church, taking into consideration the multicultural, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue as well as the promotion and protection of human rights deeply linked with evangelization.

Migrants and refugees do not have only material, but also spiritual, needs to which the Church is called to respond through a holistic pastoral care as a specific area of action within the ordinary pastoral care of the Church. The participants of the Congress agreed that the starting point for Church ministry is an understanding of the situation of migrants and refugees in all its dimensions – personal, social, and political - in the light of God's Word and of the Social Teaching of the Church. The more migrants and refugees themselves are actively involved in pastoral processes, the deeper the pastoral understanding of their situation and the more fruitful their spiritual life will be. They have been and continue to be valuable evangelizers in their receiving country, often secularized societies or societies of non-Christian traditions.

The participants of the Congress noted that the tragedies of forced and voluntary migration are still growing throughout the world and that adequate answers, which put people first and affirm their dignity, have hardly been developed. Violations of human rights, armed conflicts, political oppression, poverty and economic disruption, degradation of the environment, lack of safety nets for basic needs in moments of crisis and lack of people's participation in discussions that affect their lives all lead to forms of migration as a way of escaping conditions of life that have become practically unbearable. Behind the statistics human beings are hidden: individuals with faces, families who love and are loved, persons like everyone else. Each one has a reason for emigrating, with hopes, aspirations and fears.

While the participants of the Congress recognized the right of sovereign States to regulate migration flows, they expressed concern over the lack of respect for the human rights of migrants and refugees. They endure both individual and collective sufferings, often finding themselves in unfamiliar surroundings with different norms, values, and customs. Places that gave meaning and dignity to their life are frequently lost to them forever; often traumatic experiences leave scars that last a lifetime. In a world of economic globalization which practically pushes them to migrate, they face incomprehension in general and - for a growing number of them - stricter movement regulations as well as suspicion, prejudice and xenophobia.

Taking into account that migration flows lead ever more to the formation of multicultural and multi-religious societies, the participants of the Congress underlined the importance of increased dialogue among cultures and religions as well as among Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities. However, dialoguing with others presupposes that those who are partners in dialogue are well-aware of their cultural identity and well-formed in their religion.

Against this background, the Congress makes the following RECOMMENDATIONS concerning the mission of the Church toward migrants and refugees.

Pastoral Care

1. The care of migrants and refugees in the first years of this millennium is an essential part of new evangelization. The various pastoral structures provided for by the Church through many years of experience (including personal parishes, *missio cum cura animarum*, chaplaincies for migrants, etc.) must be updated and mobilized for this new evangelization.
2. Liturgical celebrations and catechetical instruction are privileged instruments in the care of migrants and refugees. Also for them, the weekly celebration of the Eucharist is the summit and source of their Christian life. They should therefore be able to celebrate the liturgy and learn catechism in their own language.
3. These celebrations are also an important occasion to live Christian communion and experience the catholic dimension of faith, enriched by the cultural and spiritual patrimony of migrants and refugees.
4. Expressions of popular religiosity which are dear to migrants and refugees should be recognized and valued by the Church in the receiving countries.
5. Migrant communities are also a privileged area for vocation ministry.
6. Migrants and refugees are a resource for and can contribute to Church and society. Thus, they should be respected and appreciated by the local population.
7. At the same time, the local population has the right to preserve its cultural identity, which migrants and refugees, in turn, must respect and understand.
8. Pastoral care should be guided by a spirituality of communion and service, which promotes a presence of compassion, patient acceptance and listening also to those who have sometimes been severely hurt.
9. It should be led by the principle that no one, be they migrants, refugees or members of the local population, should be looked upon as a “stranger”, but rather as a “gift”, in parishes and other ecclesial communities. This is an authentic expression of the “catholicity” of the Church.
10. Pastoral care is, first of all, the responsibility of the Church in the receiving country. However, as far as possible, adequate preparation of migrants before departure should be provided by the Church in the country of origin.
11. The duty of the Church of origin includes, as far as possible, accompanying migrants and refugees by priests, religious and lay pastoral agents, preferably of their native language and rites. Missionaries, although not primarily dedicated to the care of migrants, should also consider involving themselves in this mission.
12. Initiatives of pastoral care and spiritual and psychological support should be offered by the Church in the country of origin to the families of migrants left behind. Families of migrants in the receiving country should make full use of offices for counseling available therein.
13. Co-operation and sharing among local Churches in the care of migrants and refugees should be encouraged and developed, at the national, regional and continental levels, through dialogue, common initiatives and pastoral visits.
14. The pastoral care of migrants and refugees should foster their integration in the local Church. Therefore, it should be given its due place in the ordinary pastoral care of the Diocese.
15. The local Church should ensure that migrants and refugees are constitutive and active participants in the life of the local Christian community, and be allowed representation in the parish and diocesan councils.
16. Migrants and refugees need to be given adequate spiritual formation and the possibility to live fully their spiritual and sacramental life.
17. A special effort must be made to provide appropriate care to migrants and refugees who live in countries where the public expression of faith is hampered or not allowed.

18. Migrants and refugees are rendered vulnerable in their experience and become a target of the activity of sects. Pastoral agents and Christian communities should provide them support and a community atmosphere to avoid their marginalization, which gives field to the sects.
19. The Church should develop more concern for the children of migrants, unaccompanied children, migrant women, irregular migrants and asylum seekers in detention centers.
20. The migrant youth, especially in the 2nd and 3rd generation, strive with issues of identity and belonging, and require specific attention to be helped participate in the local Christian community.
21. The Day of the Migrant and the Refugee, sometimes extended to a week, should be celebrated in all Dioceses and utilized as an occasion to deepen the understanding of the various dimensions of migration. The Message of the Holy Father released on such an occasion should be given proper publicity. It should be made available in all the languages spoken by the migrants and refugees in the local Church, at least when translations are available.
22. In consideration of the relevance migration has for the life of the Church and for the world, suggestions were expressed that an Encyclical Letter on migration be issued. A proposal for an Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on migration to be convened was also presented.

Study, education and formation

1. The issues related to the definition of refugee and the concept of migrant must be further analyzed in view of providing necessary protection to categories of persons currently neglected.
2. The Church must find ways to give wide circulation to her Social Teaching, and specifically the teachings about migrants and refugees, for example, by providing literature and pastoral kits on various subjects.
3. Persons involved in the assistance and care of migrants and refugees (priests, religious and lay pastoral agents) need and should be provided with adequate formation to be more effective in their action in the context of the growing complexity of population movements. Such formation should be an integral part of the regular formation programs for priests and religious, from the seminary onwards, as well as of specific initiatives. A specialized institute in Rome (the “Scalabrini International Migration Institute”), as well as various programs and courses at different universities all over the world, are available for specific formation in this regard.
4. The work done by academic institutions of the Church in the scientific study of the social and pastoral aspects of human mobility should be encouraged and supported.
5. Catholic universities are encouraged to create study centres on issues of human mobility and special programmes should be offered in schools for education in this regard.
6. The Church must contribute toward education on intercultural, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue, especially through her schools.
7. Results of research on migration should be widely utilized by parishes and ecclesial communities, as well as Church leaders, to maintain awareness of the transformations occurring in migration and society.

Communication

1. In the light of the powerful impact of the way migrants and refugees are portrayed by mass media, specific initiatives must be taken by the Church to demand balanced and fair reports, and utilize her own media to present the full situation of migrants and refugees, often victims of exploitation, but also resources for a better society.

2. The Catholic Church should favour common standings with other Churches and/or other religions regarding service of migrants and refugees and express this through available media.
3. Radio stations, which are sometimes the only means of mass-communication, should be fully utilized for information to migrants and refugees, particularly during emergency times.

Dialogues

1. Migration can be regarded as an invitation to live “communion in diversity”. Therefore, the importance of dialogue between cultures and religions must be recognized.
2. The great diversification of origins in migration flows has placed ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue at the center of the care for migrants and refugees, making these dialogues not an option, but an obligation inherent in the Church’s mission in migration.
3. Multicultural, inter-religious and ecumenical dialogue should be carried out in the context of “new evangelization”.
4. Dialogue and mission are both part of the Church’s ministry. *Missio ad gentes* (mission to peoples), *missio ad migrantes* (mission to migrants) and *missio migrantium* (mission by migrants) must be kept as interrelated dimensions of this new evangelization.

Co-operation

1. Ecumenical co-operation should be broadened and strengthened.
2. Collaboration between the Church and NGOs, in advocacy and protection of migrants and refugees, should be encouraged and strengthened.

Advocacy

The Church considers her action toward the protection of migrants and refugees as an integral part of her mission.

1. The Church should forcefully advocate for interpreters, legal counsellors etc., whom migrants and refugees need in order to plead their cause.
2. The Church must find ways to help undocumented immigrants, who are already part of the society where they live and work, to obtain a legal status therein.
3. The Church should respond to the needs of migrants and refugees also through actions facilitating long term solutions of problems affecting them.
4. Bishops’ Conferences should more often use their good offices to influence legislation in favour of migrants and refugees.
5. The Church should intervene to speak in favor of freedom of religion on behalf of migrants who cannot practice it in the receiving country.
6. The Church must intervene to defend the right of migrants to live with their family. It should demand that such right be recognized and no obstacles introduced to family reunification.
7. The Church should speak out more clearly against new forms of slavery like, for example, those existing in the undeclared labour market - which acts as a major pull factor for irregular immigration - or in human trafficking, which victimizes mostly women and children in prostitution and the trade of organs.
8. The Church should advocate a reformulation of cultural rights.

Part III. Appeals

The Congress appeals to the Church, her hierarchy, her members and her related organizations

1. to recognize migrants and refugees as a sign of our times when God calls His Church to live more fully her catholic dimension and her vocation as pilgrim Church;
2. to take more seriously her vocation to walk with migrants and refugees, in whom the face of Christ can be seen (cf. Mt. 25: 31-46);
3. to respond to the various calls for help through a holistic approach to pastoral care integrating, in particular,
 - a. specific pastoral programmes which include adequate formation in view of the services to be fulfilled,
 - b. networks of improved communication within the Church,
 - c. a stronger commitment to advocacy,
 - d. further ecumenical cooperation,
 - e. dialogue among cultures and religions;
4. to have an increasingly more active and welcomed presence of migrants and refugees within the Church, recognizing their rich cultural and spiritual patrimony as an asset for the local Church, including appropriate expressions of their popular religiosity and liturgical celebrations;
5. to witness that injustice can be overcome.

The Congress appeals to the Holy See

to ratify as soon as possible the UN Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

The Congress appeals to Governments, legislative Bodies and International Organizations

1. to respect and protect the human dignity and human rights (especially the freedom of conscience, cult and religion) of migrants and refugees, be they in a regular or an irregular situation, and not to make international terrorism a pretext to reduce their rights;
2. to give special attention to migrant children, young people and women, and institute heavy sanctions against their exploitation;
3. to admit that policies which are only repressive and restrictive towards migrants and refugees are unable to control migratory flows;
4. to develop comprehensive, realistic and just approaches in global, regional, and local migration management;
5. to fulfil obligations under international and national laws, in letter and spirit, without any reservations. Special reference is given to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its related Protocols, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman Treatment or Punishment, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its related Protocols, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
6. to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
7. to further develop and encourage a system of international responsibilities for internally displaced persons, based on the “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement”;
8. to vigorously maintain and, when new phenomena require it, broaden the present 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, including its

existing minimum standards for vital necessities, entrusted to the UNHCR, which requires need-based budgets;

9. to offer better services to migrants including the protection of their right not to have their identity and travel papers subtracted from their possession, and appeals to embassies to assist better their emigrants;
10. to promote justice and peace, reconciliation and integral development in the light of the common good of the whole humankind;
11. to address and tackle effectively the root causes of migration.

The Congress denounces

the permanent tragedies resulting in the loss of lives of migrants in many different frontier zones in the world like, for example, the passage of the Strait of Gibraltar between Morocco and Spain, the one of Rio Grande and of the desert between Mexico and the United States, as well as the one between Africa and the Island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean.

Therefore the Congress appeals to those concerned to face the true causes that provoke these serious and dramatic events and to exert maximum effort and employ all means necessary to avoid such painful tragedies when co-ordinating and regulating migration flows.

The Congress appeals to all migrants and refugees

1. for those who are Christians, to be true witnesses of their faith, particularly in countries where Christians are a minority;
2. to be protagonists in building a society which grows in mutual respect and in the recognition of the inalienable dignity of each human being;
3. to learn, as much as possible, the local language of their receiving country;
4. to engage in dialogue with the local people and be interested in their culture;
5. to know their rights in the country of arrival and the proper authorities to approach for the redress of any grievances;
6. to help their children and grandchildren in the latter's efforts towards full integration in the receiving country, while preserving their cultural identity;
7. to appreciate the receiving country and respect its laws and cultural identity.

The Congress appeals to civil society and its individual members

1. to meet migrants and refugees without prejudice;
2. to appreciate the cultural origins of every person, and respect different cultural practices, as long as they do not contradict the universal ethical values inherent in the natural law or in human rights;
3. to combat racism, xenophobia and exaggerated nationalism;
4. to help migrants and refugees feel at home, as much as possible, in spite of their situation.