



## **Refugees Digest 14** **March 2017**

### **Refugees, Migrants and Displaced Persons**

A number of events on the world stage have prompted strong responses from various faith communities to issues around itinerant people. The present Digest captures a wide sampling of such reflections and initiatives. Most documents include the contested area of integration and the need for integration to be based on deep dialogue, shared rights and responsibilities, the need for receiving communities and the need for help for migrants so that they can overcome structural obstacles to their integration. Church teaching stresses that integration does not mean assimilation or incorporation. Also, special emphasis has been placed on integrating families and this is often against many contemporary policies where family reunification is discouraged. Recently the Pope repeated that the proper response to migration lies in four verbs: 'to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate.' The Pope reminded people that these responses were proper especially in the present climate of rejection of migrants based on self-centeredness, amplified by populist rhetoric.

There is also a link to an analysis of the two recent memos from the US Dept. of Homeland Security on the plans for the deportation of undocumented migrants. These include the hire of 10,000 new immigration agents and 5,000 new border officers to join existing agents and officers and local police forces in implementing immigration policy. The memos allow for the swift deportation of anyone whom an immigration officer suspects poses a risk to public safety. There is also an instruction for border authorities to deport to Mexico anyone who entered the USA illegally even if they are not Mexicans. The Mexican government has made it clear that they will not accept the unilateral imposition of such orders. At the time of writing senior US cabinet members were in Mexico trying to smooth over troubled waters and find a more nuanced interpretation of President Trump's executive orders. The outcome remains to be seen. The Catholic Bishops Conference of the USA has responded reminding the government that the memoranda could well 'upend peaceful communities, needlessly separate families, breakdown trust between the police and immigrant communities and endanger the lives of the most vulnerable.' The response of the bishops also points out that acting on the memoranda will militarise the USA/Mexico border and remove protections in place to protect the vulnerable, especially children and asylum seekers.

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- <http://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/01/30/550-attend-mass-outside-white-house-solidarity-refugees>
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- <http://www.usccb.org/news/2017/17-043.cfm>
- [https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-02-24-us-promises-no-mass-deportations-in-bid-to-calm-mexico?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=First%20Thing%2024th%20February%202017%20Trainspotting&utm\\_content=First%20Thing%2024th%20February%202017%20Trainspotting+CID\\_047b1641f45746953d9c7844826d0fa7&utm\\_source=TouchBasePro&utm\\_term=Trumps%20team%20Mexico%20walk%20back%20immigration%20comments](https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-02-24-us-promises-no-mass-deportations-in-bid-to-calm-mexico?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=First%20Thing%2024th%20February%202017%20Trainspotting&utm_content=First%20Thing%2024th%20February%202017%20Trainspotting+CID_047b1641f45746953d9c7844826d0fa7&utm_source=TouchBasePro&utm_term=Trumps%20team%20Mexico%20walk%20back%20immigration%20comments)