

ETHICS, THEOLOGY AND MIGRATION: THE CRY OF GOD’S PEOPLE IN THE CURRENT U.S. POLITICAL CLIMATE

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The “push and pull factors” surrounding the phenomenon of migration have always existed. The reasons migrants leave their countries differ, although most of them are primarily driven by the need for survival. From a biblical perspective, God commands us to love, show concern, and offer hospitality to strangers and foreigners (Ex 23:9; Lv 19:33). The migration of the Holy Family due to persecution is an evident reminder of God’s desire to welcome those fearing for their lives (Mt 2:15). The Gospel of Matthew also recounts the Sermon on the Mount where, through the Beatitudes, Jesus challenges us to respond more radically and practically to the needs of the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed, and the forgotten. In effect, Jesus constantly reminds us to listen to their cries. For Scripture says, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me” (Mt 25:35-36).

Today, we continue to hear the cry of migrants/immigrants in many places across the United States. Government policies and the rhetoric that criminalize migration mirror a social-political blindness that reflects a pharaonic attitude toward migration realities. These social sins weaken our moral cons-

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ciency and the culture of solidarity in our communities, leading to the erosion of our fraternity as members of the same human family.

Even though our immigrant communities have been traumatized, distressed, and marginalized, they remain hopeful about the future. St. Paul states, “So faith, hope, and love remain, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). In effect, without love, our actions become meaningless and insignificant. Thus, God continues to speak through our circumstances; we are called to examine how our actions—pursuing holiness and virtue—reflect our faith in one another and in our struggles. We need to remove the veil of our traditional Christian mindset and adopt a new ethical and moral theology that challenges us, in our daily lives, to ask: What is the Church doing to serve the most vulnerable? Is the Church speaking up, or is it complicit in the violation of the human dignity of our sisters and brothers? Therefore, we must not let the current political climate and anti-immigrant rhetoric undermine our moral conscience. We cannot allow those who do not show genuine Christian values to influence our actions.

Gaudium et Spes reminds us that the Church must examine “the signs of the times,” interpret them in light of the gospel, and address the perennial questions (n. 4). As baptized Christians, we are called to live out our Christian values and condemn the prevailing political and social mindset that treats such actions as if they are divine missions. When this mindset takes hold, the results can be deadly: dignity is lost, and the emergence of new values and issues across all aspects of life leads to the rise of two equally mistaken positions: “the subjectivism of consciousness and the rigid defense of inflexible rigorism” (*Moral Fundamental*, p. 420).

This moral confusion reflects the challenging situation many Hispanic/Latino immigrants face across the U.S. today. They are the primary targets of political lawmakers who claim to uphold Christian values, using their political and social influence to spread baseless historical claims and distorted, corrupt facts aimed at scapegoating immigrants. This causes some individuals to have a moral conscience paralyzed by fear, while others are motivated by action and creativity to support and meet the needs of immigrants. Conversely, some may have a diminished moral sense because they are not personally or directly affected by the current political climate and polarized rhetoric.

The unjust treatment of Hispanics/Latinos echoes Jesus’ passion. Jesus was accused of breaking Jewish law. However, behind the *Sanhedrin’s* anger and false accusations, Jesus sought to expose the misuse and abuse by church and political leaders who put their own financial and political interests first (Mt 26:57-68). The situation is no different for Hispanic/Latino immigrants today, whose only violation of law is a forced migration caused by national

and global powers that value wealth over the rights and dignity of vulnerable communities around the world.

Hence, in his new Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo XIV urges all Christians to live out and practice solidarity with all peoples. He quotes Pope Francis on the matter of solidarity: “Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We need to see, and then enable others to see, that migrants and refugees are not just a problem to be solved. However, our migrant brothers and sisters are to be welcomed, respected, and loved” (n. 75).

Christ experienced the same reality that many of our sisters and brothers experience today. He came to his own, and his own did not welcome him (Jn 1:11). In these unsettling and fractured times, Christians and people of goodwill ought to practice an ethic of solidarity and live out the theological virtues that involve cultivating human moral character so that “[we] can always recognize in migrants the living presence of the Lord” (*Dilexi Te*, n. 73). Thus, we ought to hear the cry of our sisters and brothers and safeguard their God-given dignity and rights.

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