

**From the Office of Peace, Justice, and Ecological Integrity**  
**Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth**  
**Reflection for Election 2020 – October 2, 2020**

**From Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, #81**

81. The Gospel mandate to "welcome the stranger" requires Catholics to care for and stand with newcomers, authorized and unauthorized, including unaccompanied immigrant children, refugees and asylum-seekers, those unnecessarily detained, and victims of human trafficking. Comprehensive reform is urgently necessary to fix a broken immigration system and should include a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship; a work program with worker protections and just wages; family reunification policies; access to legal protections, which include due process procedures; refuge for those fleeing persecution and violence; and policies to address the root causes of migration. The right and responsibility of nations to control their borders and to maintain the rule of law should be recognized but pursued in a just and humane manner. The detention of immigrants should be used to protect public safety and not for purposes of deterrence or punishment; alternatives to detention, including community-based programs, should be emphasized.

**Reflection:**

1. Pope Francis has made the global migration crisis a central theme of his pontificate. His first trip outside of Rome was to the Italian island of Lampedusa, a way station for many refugees making their way to Europe. He celebrated mass on an altar made of a capsized boat full of refugees and in his homily asked the question, "Has any of us wept because of this situation and others like it? Has anyone grieved for the death of these brothers and sisters? We are a society that has forgotten how to weep." Spend some time in prayer with these questions. The United Nations estimates that at the end of 2019 there were 79.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world. Will you carry those people into the voting booth with you? Have you forgotten how to weep?

2. How much do you know about your ancestors? Are you descended from the First Peoples of this land, victims of genocide? Do you have ancestors among the 12.5 million victims of the African slave trade? In 1890, nearly 15% of the US population were European immigrants-do you have ancestors there? Lament for the injustices those people suffered. What do you know about immigrants today? How do you hear their voices? How are you in solidarity with them?

3. How can you see the intersections, connect the dots, between peoples on the move and other social issues? It's estimated that 61.5 of global refugees are forced to move by climate disasters. When you use petroleum products do you think, "I am forcing someone from their home?" In

2019, more than two-thirds of all refugees came from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. Investigate how US foreign and economic policies have contributed to the plight of people in these countries.

**Deeper Dive:**

-Use the two-page reflection sheet *Justice for Immigrants in US Policy* from the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns

<https://maryknollogc.org/sites/default/files/electionbriefimmigration.3.pdf>

-Watch the webinar *Justice for Immigrants in US Policy* also from the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qowfi\\_sero&t=163s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9qowfi_sero&t=163s)

**Prayer:**

Good and gracious God, We ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who must leave their ancestral homes because the land can no longer sustain the members of the community. Be with them in their hardships as they move in search of a better life. Show mercy to those who travel in danger, and lead them to places of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by changing weather patterns, altered landscapes and natural disasters. Help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families and to open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality to our sisters and brothers in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst. We ask this in your name. Amen.

Catholic Health Association of the United States