



*Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because he cannot be at home in it – because he is out of place in it, and yet must be in it – his place is with those others who do not belong, who are rejected because they are regarded as weak; and with those who are discredited, who are denied the status of persons, and are tortured, exterminated. With those for whom there is no room, Christ is present in this world. He is mysteriously present in those for whom there seems to be nothing but the world at its worst.* -Thomas Merton, Trappist monk

## Creating a Culture of Encounter National Migration Week 2017

**January 8-14, 2017 (Week after the Feast of the Epiphany)**

For the millions of people fleeing war, violence and oppression, there may seem to be nothing but what Merton calls “the world at its worst.” As Catholics we are called to **see Christ** in these children, women and men, and to **be Christ** for them. This is particularly appropriate as we remember the Holy Family’s Flight into Egypt after the feast of the Epiphany.

“For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week, which is an opportunity for the Church to reflect on the circumstances confronting migrants, including immigrants, refugees, children, and victims and survivors of human trafficking.

The theme for National Migration Week 2017 draws attention to Pope Francis’ call to create a culture of encounter, and in doing so to look beyond our own needs and wants to those of others around us... [Pope Francis] emphasized the importance of encounter in the Christian faith: *For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: **encounter others.***

With respect to migrants, too often in our contemporary culture we fail to encounter them as persons, and instead look at them as others or render them invisible. We do not take the time to engage migrants in a meaningful way, as fellow children of God, but remain aloof to their presence and suspicious of their intentions. During this National Migration Week, let us all take the opportunity to engage migrants as community members and neighbors – all of whom are worthy of our attention and support.”



*A Syrian mother tries to warm up her daughter after they arrived on the island of Lesbos.*  
(Louisa Gouliamaki/Getty)

Resources for National Migration Week for you and your parish:  
[www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/](http://www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week/)

### Talking Points:

- ◆ Immigration is about real people who are trying to find a better life and a new beginning. As Pope Francis stated, “Each migrant has a name, a face and a story.”
- ◆ Welcoming immigrants is part of the Catholic Social Teaching and reflects the Biblical tradition to welcome the stranger.
- ◆ Forced displacement of people is at the highest level since World War II, with more than 65 million people displaced around the world.
- ◆ Refugees are the most rigorously screened population coming into America. This screening happens before they ever set foot in our country. The United States has the most thorough background checks of immigrants of any nation in the world.



*Migrants off the coast of Libya (Getty)*

### Prayers of Petition at Mass:

*For all Catholics, that God inspire them to take action in their local communities to support and protect migrants and to advocate on their behalf, we pray to the Lord*

### Action Steps:

- ◆ Advocate with your Member of Congress for an increase in the numbers of refugees accepted into the U.S.
- ◆ Write a letter to the editor as a way to promote education on migration.
- ◆ Post your support for immigrants and refugees on social media
- ◆ Volunteer to teach English to newcomers

## From Global Catholic Climate Movement: *Laudato Si*-fy your Advent

“Our habits to consume are very strong. They are reinforced by our culture that tells us that our happiness is dependent on owning the latest gadget, product, or experience. To break this consumerist habit, we need to become aware of this internal energy to consume, so that we don’t blindly follow it. This is a contemplative practice—to begin to see how the market and cultural forces shape our interior world.

1. **Notice your internal impulse** to buy more, to eat more, to do more things that are not essential. This can be owning the latest electronic gadgets and buying the trendiest clothes. It can also be over-consuming more information or social media than is necessary, eating (and often wasting) too much food, or trying to pack in too many activities. It might feel like a subtle tug or pull in the body which we are conditioned to give into. This is normal and natural, but it doesn’t mean you have to follow the tug to consume more than you need.



2. **Pause and take a breath.** Then find a phrase to ground you such as “Less is more”, “Jesus is the reason” or even “Do I need to get/do this?” in order to remind you of your commitment to not over-consume and to keep your eyes on Jesus.

3. **Make a choice based on your commitment** to live simply, in order to create space and time to focus on what is essential: God, relationships, service, and caring for our earth community.”

See [www.catholicclimatemovement.global/advent](http://www.catholicclimatemovement.global/advent) for more Advent ideas.

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