

# THE JOURNEY / *El Camino* LETTER FOR CATHOLIC MIGRANT MINISTRY



December 2020

Christmas greetings and best wishes to you from our Catholic Migrant Ministry team!

This year, all of us, throughout our state and nation— and indeed our world—have faced some very hard months with COVID-19 and its ramifications. In the midst of all the sorrow, fear, and hardships, we have witnessed joy, hope and neighbors lifting neighbors. As we enter the unique and special time of Advent and Christmas in the Church, we write to say thank you for your support and commitment.

During the pandemic, many initiatives took place to best support our migrants. It would not have been possible without countless volunteers and organizations helping to collect and distribute:

- ✿ Food collection drive for migrant families throughout our region
- ✿ Donation of winter gear – coats, hats and gloves
- ✿ Donation of bicycles and helmets for both adults and children
- ✿ Creation of a Food Pantry in the Tepeyac Welcoming Migrant Center in Leicester, New York
- ✿ Donation of beds and furnishings such as televisions, mini-refrigerators, microwaves, lamps, tables and other household items.

In mid-October, we opened the Tepeyac Welcoming Migrant Center in Livingston County. Mass is offered twice a month on Saturdays at 7:00 pm. On December 12, 2020, we will celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe – which, as you know, is an important religious and cultural day celebrated in Mexico. Sacramental preparation is also available. We are slowly building a faith community! At the Center, we are beginning to implement workshops, focusing on English as a Second Language and Family Support, and food distribution.

For all of us, the ongoing pandemic has touched every area of our lives. Through it all, we have witnessed resilience and, with it, open and generous hearts. We have seen younger families working longer hours in the fields to not only meet their needs, but to also build a safety ‘cushion’ for others who may need help. In Marion, the sacramental preparation for First Communion was just beginning when the pandemic hit. Small-group preparation was made possible when families stepped in to open their homes and front yards for the classes. Twenty-eight children received First Communion during August!

#### *Our Mission Statement:*

“Catholic Migrant Ministry, rooted in the Church’s teaching that we are all sisters and brothers, seeks not only to build up migrant workers as people of faith, but also to foster a mutual sharing of gifts, both material and spiritual, between all migrant workers and the other faith communities of the Diocese of Rochester.”

#### *Editorial Team:*

Bernard Grizard, Diocesan Director, Pastoral Services

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Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Wayne and Yates Counties

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On October 4, the Feast day of Saint Francis, Pope Francis' most recent Encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (*All Brothers*) was published. In it, Pope Francis writes of our role as one of encouraging all others to join in a project that has no boundaries and that requires the participation of every single human being, no matter how poor or marginalized, if it is truly to bring into being a world that is fruitful and health-giving. This is the core of our Catholic Migrant Ministry. It is what we witness in you, with so many encouraging signs of solidarity within and among our diverse communities. Let the examples above serve as encouraging signs of what we have, and can furthermore accomplish, if all people really did resolve to love God and neighbor. Or as Pope Francis puts it:

*“Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.”*

Address at the Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting with Young People, Skopje, North Macedonia (7 May 2019):  
L'Osservatore Romano, 9 May 2019, p. 9.

Thank you for the generosity and support you have shown throughout the years, especially this year with the hardships and challenges you may be facing. We know people are suffering unexpected burdens and crises. Please know we deeply appreciate your ongoing spiritual support. If you are able and interested in sending a donation to support our Catholic Migrant Ministry, enclosed is an envelope.



Refugees La Sagrada Familia, By Kelly Latimore

May Christmas bring you the blessings of peace and hope.  
With our prayers and gratitude,

Father Jesús Flores  
Diocesan Coordinator  
Migrant Ministry  
Department of Pastoral Services

Bernard Grizard  
Diocesan Director  
Department of Pastoral Services



**PASTORAL SERVICES**  
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

*Debtor in Possession*