

Papal Letter to the Mexican Government on Unaccompanied Migrant Children

July, 2014

*Papal message on the occasion of
"Mexico/Holy See colloquium on human migration and development"*

Mexico City, 14 July 2014

I would like to extend my greetings to the organizers, speakers, and participants in the "Mexico Holy See colloquium on human migration and development". Globalization is a phenomenon that challenges us, especially in one of its principal manifestations which is emigration. It is one of the "signs" of this time that we live in and that brings us back to the words of Jesus, "Why do you not know how to interpret the present time?" (Lk 12,57). Despite the large influx of migrants present in all continents and in almost all countries, migration is still seen as an emergency, or as a circumstantial and sporadic fact, while instead it has now become a hallmark of our society and a challenge.

It is a phenomenon that carries with it great promise and many challenges. Many people forced to emigrate suffer, and often, die tragically; many of their rights are violated, they are obliged to separate from their families and, unfortunately, continue to be the subject of racist and xenophobic attitudes.

Faced with this situation, I repeat what I have affirmed in this year's Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees: "A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization – all typical of a throwaway culture – towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world".

I would also like to draw attention to the tens of thousands of children who migrate alone, unaccompanied, to escape poverty and violence: This is a category of migrants from Central America and Mexico itself who cross the border with the United States under extreme conditions and in pursuit of a hope that in most cases turns out to be vain. They are increasing day by day. This humanitarian emergency requires, as a first urgent measure, these children be welcomed and protected. These measures, however, will not be sufficient, unless they are accompanied by policies that inform people about the dangers of such a journey and, above all, that promote development in their countries of origin. Finally, this challenge demands the attention of the entire international community so that new forms of legal and secure migration may be adopted.

I wish every success to the laudable initiative of the Mexican government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in arranging a colloquium of study and reflection on the great challenge of migration and cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all those present.



United States Conference
of Catholic Bishops

Migration and Refugee
Services

3211 Fourth Street, NE
Washington, DC 20017

202-541-3174