



## World Day of Migrants and Refugees: *September 27, 2020*

### Origins

The origins of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees can be traced to 1914, a few months before the outbreak of World War I. Touched by the drama of millions of Italians who had migrated abroad since the beginning of the 20th century, Pope Pius X called on all Christians to pray for migrants. A few months later, his successor Pope Benedict XV instituted the Day of the Migrant to support spiritually and economically the pastoral work for Italian emigrants.

In 1952, Migrant Day took on a broader and more international connotation and the particular Churches were called upon to choose a date to celebrate the day during the liturgical year. St. John Paul II was the first pontiff to issue, since 1985, a message each year drawing attention to some of the specific realities and difficulties of people on the move, calling the Church to action.

In 2004, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People extended the day to refugees calling it the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. At the behest of St. John Paul II, since 2005, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees has been celebrated by the Universal Church on the 2nd Sunday after the Epiphany. On the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 14, 2018, Pope Francis announced that the day will be marked henceforth on the last Sunday of September.



**Migrants flee the camp as a second fire breaks out at Greece Migrant camp, Wed. Sept. 9, 2020**

*“Forced like Jesus Christ to flee” – theme of World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2020*

The Catholic Church’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees this year is focussing on the pastoral care of internally displaced persons (IDPs), who currently number over 41million worldwide.

In the light of the tragic events that have marked 2020, Pope Francis would like his Message, although concerned with internally displaced persons, to embrace all those who are experiencing situations of precariousness, abandonment, marginalization and rejection as a result of COVID-19.

**Message for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees:**

<https://www.osservatoreromano.va/en/news/2020-05/like-jesus-christ-forced-to-flee.html>



## Japan's Bishops: look at IDPs without prejudice



**A man smokes at a homeless camp under a bridge on Jan. 16, 2020, in Tokyo**

*In a message on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Japan's bishops are urging the country's citizens to free themselves from preconceptions and bias against the displaced people in society and accept and protect them, living in harmony with them.*

"There are many internally displaced persons in Japan today," noted Bishop Michiaki Yamanouchi of Saitama, president of the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants and People on the Move. He made the comment in a message posted on the website of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan (CBCJ), for the Catholic Church's World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be celebrated on September 27.

### **Reflecting Pope's message**

"Forced like Jesus Christ to flee" is the theme that Pope Francis has chosen for the 106th edition of the observance this year. In a message for the occasion, the Holy Father calls for attention and new policies for the world's growing number of internally displaced people (IDPs) and embraces all who are suffering precariousness, abandonment, marginalization and rejection as a result of Covid-19.

Bishop Yamanouchi's message on behalf of the Japanese bishops is entitled, "Accept, protect, encourage, and live in harmony with internally displaced persons, like Jesus Christ, who cannot help but flee."

### **Japan's displaced**

The Japanese bishops pointed out IDPs in Japan are those who have lost or fled their homes for various reasons. Some are undocumented and have been detained in immigration facilities for long periods. Some have been provisionally released but are homeless, while others are forced to live on the streets.

In Japan, there are also the so-called net cafe refugees or the cyber-homeless, a class of homeless people who sleep in 24-hour internet or manga cafes. Although these places originally provided only internet services, some have expanded their services to include food, drink, and showers.

### **Ogata - a model**

As a model of how to treat IDPs, Bishop Yamanouchi pointed to the figure of Sadako Ogata of Japan, the first woman to be named the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the first Japanese national to hold that position. During her tenure of office from 1991 to 2000, she highlighted the reality of IDPs in the world.

During the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf War, Ogata went beyond the established limits and helped the almost two million Kurds, a mix of refugees and internally displaced persons in Iraq. "This was the moment when the light shone on the IDPs," the Japanese bishops pointed out.

### **Discovering Christ's face in IDPs**

"I believe that the Pope is calling us to look at the realities of our society and to go beyond our narrow points of view," concluded the bishops' message, inviting the Japanese people to discover the face of Christ in the faces of refugees, migrants and displaced persons who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, homeless and in prison.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2020-08/japan-bishops-message-world-day-migrants-refugees-idps.html>





*Ministry to Migrants in Pictures: fr. Sebastian Shitol OMI, South Korea*

*Mass attendees and volunteers*



*Retreat before Christmas*



*Games played by migrants and parishioners during Christmas celebration and Korean National Day*







*On Mothers' day: Congratulations, Moms!*



*COVID-19 pandemic: Preparation of relief for migrants*





*Recipients of donations during pandemic - each 200\$ and goods*





**Useful links:**

**Independent Catholic News:**

<https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/37992>

**“Forced like Jesus Christ to flee”: To listen in order to be reconciled**

<https://youtu.be/ZeOt2PGn8sg>

**International Catholic Migration Commission:**

**How is forced displacement affecting families?** <https://www.icmc.net/>

Praised be Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate

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