



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

We celebrate National Migration Week from September 23-29, 2024, culminating with the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Established over a century ago by the Holy See, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is commemorated globally by Catholics as an opportunity to reflect on the migration experience through the light of faith. *"We must build bridges, Not walls!"*

In his 2024 World Day of Migrants and Refugees message, Pope Francis points out that "God not only walks with his people, but also within them, in the sense that he identifies himself with men and women on their journey through history, particularly with the least, the poor and the marginalized." Throughout his pontificate, the Holy Father has urged us to pay closer attention to the circumstances surrounding the migration of peoples and challenged us to see the faces of these sisters and brothers of ours rather than regard them as simply statistics or, worse, burdens to be unloaded.

Here in the Diocese of Salina, National Migration Week urges us to deepen our awareness of the hardships faced by those forced to leave their homes due to natural disasters, threats of violence, or because they can no longer provide for their families in their countries. At the same time, we need to rediscover how immigrants enrich our communities and reflect on the experience of migration in the light of the Gospel tradition.

It provides an opportunity to ask ourselves — both individually and as a community — how we can better assist people in their home countries to have the stability and resources necessary so they are not forced to migrate. How can we welcome and assist our sisters and brothers who must flee? How do we step outside of our comfort zones to bring the Gospel to those living on "the peripheries" of our society? How can we advocate for just immigration reform? And how can we build bridges among nations and peoples to clearly demonstrate our unity and solidarity with all humankind? Instead of asking our brothers and sisters what their status is, we MUST ask them what we can do for them!

At the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops sponsored Justice for Immigrants website, you can learn more about Church teaching and migration. Please take advantage of the resources provided there. Enjoy and celebrate this upcoming National Migration Week and World Day of Migrants and Refugees. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we serve these brothers and sisters so dear to Christ.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald L. Vincke".

Most Reverend Gerald L. Vincke  
Bishop of Salina