

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office for Human Dignity & Solidarity—Immigration Ministry

SESSION ONE

Why Go Out of My Comfort Zone?

The Call to Immigrant Social Ministry



This project was realized with the collaboration of:

Original Spanish Language (2012)

Rev. Michael Boehm, Blessed Sacrament Church
Marilu Gonzalez

Rev. Daniel Groody, University of Notre Dame

Rev. Guillermo Campuzano, DePaul University

Dr. Alicia C. Marill, Barry University

Dr. Timothy Matovina, University of Notre Dame

Rev. Anthony Pizzo, St. Rita of Cascia

Rev. Carl Quebedeaux, C.M.F., Our Lady of
Guadalupe Church

Sr. Barbara E. Reid, O.P., Catholic Theological Union

Elena Segura, Archdiocese of Chicago's Office
of Human Dignity & Solidarity

English Translation (2107)

Meredith Walsh-Beteta, English translation,
editing, & proofing

Mark Goebel, Archdiocese of Chicago's Office
of Human Dignity & Solidarity

Kathy Osberger, Consultant

Yazmin Saldivar-Perez, Archdiocese of Chicago's
Office of Human Dignity & Solidarity

Pastoral Migratoria lay leaders in the Archdiocese
of Chicago

Michael Warrell, Design Solutions

Special acknowledgement to the Pastoral Migratoria lay leaders throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago

Printer: Excel Graphics & Forms, Des Plaines, IL

© 2012, Original Spanish language, Archdiocese of Chicago's Office of Human Dignity & Solidarity—Immigration Ministry (formerly Office of Immigrant Affairs and Immigrant Education)

© 2017 English translation, Archdiocese of Chicago's Office of Human Dignity & Solidarity—Immigration Ministry
All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America.

This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The scanning, uploading, or distribution of this book via the Internet or any other means without the express permission of the copyright holder is illegal and punishable by law.

Printing number

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



PART ONE

Introduction

Introduction and Greetings

Initial Prayer

God of love and mercy, open our hearts and our minds in order to receive your Word and to act in accordance with it. Give us the generosity to give of ourselves to others. May we feel that it is our responsibility to take care of your people because we are all your children and, therefore, brothers and sisters. May we not be afraid to offer our talents, our availability and our generosity for whatever is necessary so that we can defend the dignity of all your children. Open our eyes to see your image reflected in everyone. Give us a compassionate heart to accompany those who journey in search of a better life. That, with that same heart, we may look upon those who legislate, work, and judge undocumented immigrants so that, through our patience, respect and attention, we may touch their hearts faced with the human drama of the many people with whom we interact daily. We give you thanks for your promise to walk with us and for the abundant life you give us each day.

Readings from the Word of God

Joshua did as Moses told him: he engaged Amalek in battle while Moses, Aaron, and Hur climbed to the top of the hill. As long as Moses kept his hands raised up, Israel had the better of the fight, but when he let his hands rest, Amalek had the better of the fight. Moses' hands, however, grew tired; so they took a rock and put it under him and he sat on it. Meanwhile Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other, so that his hands remained steady until sunset. And Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the sword.—**EXODUS 17:10–13**

Now Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for his people Israel: how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. So his father-in-law Jethro took along Zipporah, Moses' wife—now this was after

Moses had sent her back—and her two sons. One of these was named Gershom; for he said, “I am a resident alien in a foreign land.”—**Exodus 18:1–3**

Commentary

Later we will return to this passage and how it relates to our caring for one another and how the support of the community has an extraordinary power.

PART TWO

Listening

From Everyday Life: Things That Happen

Antonia was a middle age woman who had been in the United States for several years when her status as an undocumented immigrant was discovered. She had worked, paid taxes and taken care of her family. She never hurt anyone, but now she was about to be deported. A group of committed Christians who were concerned about the situation had been praying for her as well as for the judge who was going to decide her case. On the day of the decision, the woman burst into tears before the judge when he told her that she could go home and did not need to return for four more years. Jokingly, the judge asked Antonia if she was crying because she wanted to see him even earlier...she answered that she was crying for joy because she knew people had been praying for the both of them. The judge asked her to tell the community to continue to pray for him. From that time on, Antonia decided to share her experience with others in order to encourage them and to offer her services in order to give hope and the desire to fight for the rights of immigrants.



FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

Fortunately, some cases have a positive ending; we know, however, that, to a great degree, is due to the support and accompaniment of many people that extended their compassion to her and to the judge, who felt moved. We know this is not always the case, but the truth is that the support of the community always makes a difference.

In which ways have you received signs of compassion and justice at some time in your life? Can you describe a time that the support of a group helped you to face the difficulties of life? In what ways did you share this with others? Do you know similar stories? Do you know of a story that doesn't end so well? What happened there?

From Everyday Life: Things That Happen

While Antonia's case ends well, we know that in recent years there has been an unprecedented number of deportations, surpassing 400,000 in a given year. Some of the people arrested were convicted criminals, but many others were detained for minor traffic violations or people who, out of fear, had not shown up in court when summoned, or were even legal residents whose status was being questioned. Often those deported are young people who have lived in the United States since infancy, hardly knowing their country of origin, and do not know anyone there. For many of them, English is their first language. Many of them have started their own families here and now they see them broken, having had to leave spouses or babies behind.

Although various Administrations have defended and supported the rights of citizens for reasons of security, patriotism and defense, in the majority of cases innocence, as well as respect for human rights and fair treatment, have not always been protected. We know there are many interests involved that are not exactly those of respect for the rights of immigrants, but rather are motivated by xenophobia or economic reasons. In some cases, we know that the prison system benefits from unjust policies of detention and deportation.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

Can you remember a time when someone showed you sympathy and consolation? Why is it necessary for immigrants to take care of one another? How can you be in solidarity with immigrants? Are you yourself in need of support? What type of support?

PART THREE

Learning

Now we will look at what Scripture, the Church and present theological reflection say about these issues, in order to discern what our attitude should be.

Enlightened by the Word

Let us read the passage from Exodus 17:10–13; 18:1–3 again.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

What word or phrase strikes you most when you hear these passages from Exodus?
Let us repeat them out loud to help one another to pray.

Understanding the Passages

EXODUS 17:10–13; 18:1–3 The Amalekites were a neighboring tribe of Judea who lived in Negueb, south of Israel, who controlled the trade routes between Egypt and Arabia. They attacked Israel for unknown reasons. Moses turns to Joshua to ask him to organize a group of men to go out on the following day to wage battle against the Amalekites. In the meantime, Moses went with his miraculous staff (the one he held to rid the plagues of Egypt) and placed it before the Lord on the mountain. Joshua and his men go to battle while Moses, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, go up the mountain. While Moses lifts up his arms in a gesture of prayer, the Israelites take the lead in battle, but when he lowers them out of tiredness, the Amalekites take the lead. The outcome of the battle seems uncertain. So his companions seat Moses on a rock and help him keep his arms elevated. The Israelites are victorious because of Moses' prayer and the community that supported him.

- Let us read the passage once again and be silent so that the Word may illuminate our lives.
 - Let us share what we have seen, what has drawn our attention and how this word enlightens us to understand the motivations for committing ourselves to take care of one another.
-

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

In what ways do we feel that the support of the community is necessary in attaining what we seek? Have you ever achieved something thanks to the support of others?
In what ways do we feel challenged to do the same? Do we pray enough, alone and in community?

Enlightened by the Doctrine of the Church

Faithful to the principles of its social teaching, which is based mainly on the principle of human dignity and that the person is made in the image and likeness of God, on many occasions the Church has reflected on immigration and has spoken about the support that it sees as necessary for immigrants, children of God and children

of the Church. One of the most recent documents on this issue is *Ecclesia in America*, published after the Synod of Bishops on America. The synod analyzed the reality of the continent and paid particular attention to the phenomenon of immigration. Among other things, the document stated:

“Throughout its history, the American continent has known many movements of immigration that led countless men and women to different regions in the hope of a better future...The church is aware of the problems caused by the situation of immigration and makes a true effort to develop pastoral care among these immigrants in order to foster their settlement and to inspire, on the other hand, an attitude of welcome on the part of local communities. In this respect, the synod fathers consider that the church in America must be a watchful advocate protecting, against all unjust restrictions, the natural right of a person to move freely within his own country and from one nation to another.” (*Ecclesia in America*, on the encounter with the living Jesus, way to conversion, communion and solidarity in America. Apostolic post-synodal exhortation, John Paul II, 1999).

Another document of interest also dealing with this issue is the concluding document from the meeting of all the bishops on the American continent in *Aparecida*, Brazil. This document offers the following for our reflection:

“At this time, there are millions of people on the continent that, for financial, political or security reasons, are in constant motion. Pastoral accompaniment is a duty of charity. As a mother, the Church knows no boundaries and is attentive to the growing phenomenon of human mobility. Our churches must establish national and diocesan structures to provide hospitality for these people and to have resources for their care, because immigrants are also disciples and missionaries.

There is a need for dialogue between the sending and the receiving churches for a better pastoral care. This is a mission requiring a good preparation and we must also prepare lay people to accompany those who leave a country and the families they leave behind. Let us be mindful of the words of Benedict XVI which saw in migrations not just a problem, but also a great resource for humanity. One of the most important tasks for the church towards migrants is that of prophetically denouncing the abuses they suffer. Another obligation consists in impacting society and on governments to achieve migration laws that take human rights into consideration. If we accompany immigrants we will be able to encourage them to become disciples and missionaries because they bring with them the richness of their faith and of their religious traditions.” (410-416)

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

What insights from these ecclesial documents do you find more interesting? As an immigrant, do you see your situation as an opportunity to evangelize and serve your people?

In the Light of Contemporary Theological Reflection

Besides the official documents, many present theologians have studied and reflected on the theological basis of migration ministry. Tim Matovina, a professor at the University of Notre Dame who has worked with and accompanied the Hispanic community in this country, considers Immigrant Social Ministry as a ministry of accompaniment. He bases this on the lives of the Early Christians, as a role model for our days. He says:

“The early Christians saw themselves as companions of the journey of Jesus, considering themselves as followers of the ‘new way’ (Acts 9:2). The first letter of Peter is addressed to ‘those who live ‘ as strangers scattered through Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bitinia’ (1:1). The letter of James is addressed to ‘the twelve scattered tribes’ (1:1). Non canonical writings from the beginning of Christianity used similar greetings, such as a letter of Clement of Rome ‘to the church of God who walks in Corinth,’ and Polycarp the martyr writes a letter ‘to the ‘ church of God who lives as a foreigner in Phillipa.’ These references reflected the real condition of many Christians as a displaced and marginalized people in the Roman Empire and in their conviction that there is no permanent city. (Heb: 13:14). The good news was, as the letter to the Ephesians says, ‘that there are no longer foreigners or strangers. Now you are citizens, companions of the saints and members of the house of God.’ (2:9). Perhaps the most eloquent narrative of the Christian identity as migrant is found in the anonymous letter to Diogneto in the 2nd or 3rd Century which assures that the Christians ‘live in their own countries’ but as foreigners...they are concerned with the affairs of the world, but their citizenship is in heaven.’”

As in Judaism, the migrant origins and identity oblige Christians to welcome the stranger, a well known command in Matthew 25. “When did we see you a stranger and welcomed you?...whenever you did it for the least of these, you did it for me (30, 40). Christ is the stranger. The stranger is Christ.”

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

What do you find most significant in these passages of the Church and of theology? As an immigrant what has it meant to be part of the faith community? Is it seen as a grace and an opportunity, or as a problem? When we can discern the signs of the times, what actions are we called to undertake? What is already being done? How do all these readings challenge my own life?

Proclaiming

Leaders are Needed!

After having reflected on all these aspects in the light of our faith and of the doctrine of the Church, we see before us a challenge to action. Why should we participate in Immigrant Social Ministry in our communities? The answer seems almost evident: This is what we have to do as Christians. Now we have before us a challenge to practice the call we have been hearing throughout this first session. In order to do this, we will have to accept and assume the leadership role in Immigrant Social Ministry.

- 1. First, what is Immigrant Social Ministry?** This is a ministry which provides an opportunity for immigrants to deepen into their faith or to rediscover it and to connect it to their lives as immigrants in this country. Answering our baptismal call, immigrants become involved in actions of service and justice as leaders of the parish community. Immigrant Social Ministry is a channel for them to reflect on the reality of the immigrant people, their struggles and victories, from the framework of faith, in order to respond adequately as a church to the concrete needs of integration, adaptation, and development in society.
- 2. Why do I have to do this? Shouldn't the priests be the ones to take care of the faithful?** In the church we have the awareness that, even if with different roles and functions, we all have the same mission. Therefore, it isn't just for the priests to take care of ministry. It is everyone's task. It implies getting out of oneself and assuming the mission that God gave to us at our Baptism.
- 3. But I don't feel like a leader. What is it to be a leader?** A leader is not an extraordinary being, but a person called by God for service. It is a free person who responds freely to God's call. Leadership is not an exercise in power, but an experience of service. It is a relationship, not an act of control. Leadership rejects the concentration of power in just a few and enters into collaboration with others: it is giving and receiving.

A leader is someone who:

- Listens and strives to understand the experience, pain and joy of others, not thinking of what to say next about themselves.
- Is capable of building community, working in a team and in collaboration with others without attempting to be the protagonist of everything.
- Is a prayerful person, recognizing that all fruit must come from God and not from their own efforts.
- Is a person who recognizes they are not perfect, who is in need of healing and therefore can better understand the need to heal others. A leader is a compassionate person.

- Acts out of love.
- Is called to be a shepherd.
- Is called to be a prophet, that is to say, to proclaim the Good News.

Leadership is for the community. As we saw in the prayer, God calls Moses and Moses acts because he hears the cry of the people. Moses, like us, is an instrument of deliverance for the people. In the Old Testament there is particular emphasis in the care of widows, orphans, and foreigners because they did not have anyone to advocate for them. Foreigners did not have a land to till. Therefore, God entrusts the king and the prophets to protect widows and orphans and to strive so that the foreigners may feel welcome. This is what a good leader does.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

Which ones of these characteristics do I have? Do I feel called? How could I prepare for it? Who could help me? Am I called to be a prophet?

PART FIVE

Final Prayer

Lord Jesus, you call us to become the support, strength and roots for ourselves and for our immigrant community. You call us to walk with the immigrants in their struggles, their sufferings and their triumphs. You expect us to answer this call with generosity and joy. Sometimes we are afraid, Lord. We think that perhaps we cannot be able to be shepherds and prophets, or the leaders that the community needs. Make us come out of ourselves. Give us the faith and the confidence to know that we never walk alone. You walk with us on our journey and you are the one who holds our arms when we flounder. That, from you, we learn to listen, to support, to have hope and joy, knowing that your promises are always fulfilled. Amen.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Human Dignity & Solidarity—Immigration Ministry
Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653