

Welcoming the Stranger: Unity in Diversity (USCCB)

CYCLE III: The call to COMMUNION and SOLIDARITY
SESSION 1: The Call to Communion (p.31-35)

Prayer: Reflect on the following readings

*“For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.”
(1 Cor 12:13)*

“As Catholics we are called to take concrete measures to overcome the misunderstanding, ignorance, competition and fear that stand in the way of genuinely welcoming the stranger in our midst and enjoying the communion that is our destiny as Children of God.” (WTS, pg.31)

Communion necessitates that we be people of hospitality and welcome. If we as Catholics are to move toward communion and solidarity, then we need to be about genuine welcome and outreach to those who are newcomers in our parish community. Knowledge of other cultures cannot just come from books, but must come from concrete efforts of individuals to get to know their neighbors in all their diversity.

To facilitate the integration of newcomers into the parish community, an openness of spirit is essential. The goal of “one spirit” that Paul refers to in 1 Cor, is not assimilation to one way of being human or a cultural adaption in the name of unity but rather the mutual enrichment of all. Communion does not abolish differences but appreciates the uniqueness of individuals and their culture, and the gift of difference that enriches that communion.

**In what way or what circumstances did you feel “different” from others in a particular group in which you wanted or needed to be a member, i.e. social group, work team, town, parish, etc.? How or what helped you to become a part of that group?*

**Have you experienced a relationship with someone of another culture, religion, race that enriched you life? Tell the story.*

**How do you respond to newcomers in your community?*

**Do you respectfully challenge people when you hear them making anti-immigrant statements?*

**What are some efforts that could be made personally and in our community that would promote unity in diversity?*

Closing Prayer:

“Bless us, O Lord, and these our gifts of differences which we have received from you. Unite us into one body of love and witness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.”

CYCLE III: The call to COMMUNION and SOLIDARITY

SESSION 2: The Call to Communion/ Solidarity P. `36 - `49

Prayer: Meditate on the song: “*All are Welcome*” (Marty Haugen 1994 GIA) and discuss whether or not the words ring true for our parish.

“The call to solidarity with immigrants, migrants, refugees, and all diverse peoples in our midst is the fruit of conversion and communion in Christ. It is well summarized by Pope John Paul II in his Message for World Migration Day 2000:

“The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness.”

MINISTRY IN A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH (37)

At the National Migration Conference in Washington DC. Robert Schreiter , CPpS identified four stages (which repeat themselves) in the cycle of adaptation of immigrants:

- Effort to “fit in”** -accommodating self to the dominant culture
- Withdrawal**- returning to own culture for strength to survive
- Negotiation** - negotiate with dominant culture in order to fit in
- Institutionalization** - incorporation into the larger culture

At what stage is our parish?

INTEGRATING A MULTICULTURAL PARISH

Schreiter further identified four goals of multicultural ministry:

- 1) End conflict (or reduce it) and avoid parallel churches
- 2) Recognize our sameness (cautions against minimalization)
- 3) Recognize and acknowledge differences (within groups as well)
- 4) Create patterns of healthy interaction.

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR LOCAL PASTORAL RESPONSE:

At the parish level, how does your local church community celebrate the gift of different cultures to the Church? How does your local Church:

- * **Welcome** all newcomers to your community?
- * **Host** well-prepared multicultural liturgies and social gatherings?
- * **Provide** inclusive lay leadership development programs
- * **Appoint** prepared leaders of immigrant communities to parish and diocesan positions?
- * **Initiate** special efforts to help immigrant youth find their way as they experience themselves torn between two cultures?

Resources:

Eric H.F. Law: The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb, Inclusion, and Sacred Acts, Holy Change, Chalice Press

USCCB: Following available at:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/publishing/multicultural/index.htm>

“Many Faces in God’s House” Parish Guide Six sessions & Manual No. 5-421

“Many Faces in God’s House” Video 5-510

“Brothers and Sisters to Us” No 653-0

“Seeking Forgiveness, Rebuilding Community” Video No 5-420

“Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself” No. 5-393

Cycle III: The *call* to COMMUNION and SOLIDARITY

Session 3: Expressing Solidarity with Immigrants and Refugees/A Call to a New Evangelization (p. 50-58)

OPENING HYMN: *Song of the Body of Christ*

Scripture Reading: *Revelation 7:9*

“After this I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue. They stood before the throne and before the Lamb, wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.”

People all over the world praise and worship God: Father, Son, and Spirit. Since our baptism the triune God has dwelt within each of us. The Holy Eucharist reminds of our responsibility to members of our spiritual family, *the Body of Christ*. Our Confirmation gives us the strength to fulfill those duties as Jesus would, calling us to solidarity with the suffering and vulnerable.

In *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II calls for a “new evangelization” that focuses on the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus took on himself the reality of human suffering and through his death and resurrection conquered evil, rekindled hope, and demonstrated a life of love, humility, and compassion. (p. 55) The Gospels, Epistles, and Acts of the Apostles elaborately recount personal encounters with the risen Jesus, which leads to a daily vision of Him “present and active in the world, especially in the poor, in the stranger, and in the migrant and refugee.” (p. 56)

On the first Pentecost the Holy Spirit made the one message of salvation intelligible to people of various cultures and languages. Responding to the new immigration today requires a similar openness to the Spirit so we might have a renewed vision of what it is to be Church. (p. 56)

Advocating for Justice

The Church teaches us that “as Catholics, we need to share our values, raise our voices, and use our votes to shape a society that protects human life, promotes family life, pursues social justice, and practices solidarity. (Administrative Board of the U. S. Catholic Bishops, Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a New Millennium, p. 12. In accordance with Catholic Social Teaching, and with the gospel mandate to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger, the Catholic Church commits itself to advocacy.

WE ADVOCATE *for just policies that respect the human rights of immigrants and preserve the unity of the immigrant family, including due rights, fair naturalization procedures, and legislation opportunities. We advocate for generous refugee policies that provide protection for those fleeing persecution.*

WE ENCOURAGE *the extension of social services, citizenship classes, and community organizing efforts that secure improved housing conditions, decent wages, better medical attention, and enhanced educational opportunities for immigrants, migrants and refugees.*

WE OPPOSE *efforts to stem migration that do not effectively address its root causes and that permit the continuation of the political, social, and economic inequities that contribute to it.*

1. Do you know of any violations of the rights of immigrants, migrants, or refugees? Have you advocated for restoration of their rights? What are some ways you could in the future? How could this be done on a parish level, community level, state level, or national level? Is community organizing a possibility?

2. What are current issues affecting immigrants, migrants, and refugees locally, statewide, nationwide, or internationally? Am I willing to write letters, make phone calls, or visit legislators? Am I willing to work with others to organize advocacy campaigns in our parish?

Closing Reflection

“Like the disciples of Emmaus, believers, supported by the living presence of the risen Christ, become in turn the traveling companions of their brothers and sisters in trouble, offering them the word which rekindles hope in their hearts. With them they break the bread of friendship, brotherhood and mutual help. This is how to build the civilization of love. This is how to proclaim the hoped-for coming of the new heavens and the new earth to which we are heading.”

Closing Prayer

Recite the “Lord’s Prayer” each in his/her native tongue

Resources:

Deuteronomy 10: 17-19

Matthew 25: 35, 38, 43-44

Hebrews 13:2

Eric H. F. Law: The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb, Inclusion, and Sacred Acts, Holy Change, Chalice Press

NCCB, *Brothers & Sisters to Us: U. S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Racism in Our Day*.
Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1979.

NCCN, *Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself: U. S. Catholic Bishops Speak Against Racism*.
Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2001.

Diocese of Joliet Peace & Social Justice website: www.paxjoliet.org

Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Refugees: www.usccb.org/mrs/pcmr

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America (Phone 773-293-2964)

National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice www.nicwj.org (Phone 773-728-8409)

Su Casa Catholic Worker (ministers to victims of torture refugees) Phone: 773-376-9263
5045 S. Laflin St., Chicago, IL 60609-4940

NETWORK (Catholic Social Justice Lobby) website: www.networklobby.org

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights website: www.icirr.org

Exodus World Service (Phone: 630-307-1400 or 312-REFUGEE) website: www.E-W-S.org