

Mission Intention FEBRUARY 2019 - 2020

Pope's February Prayer Intention

We pray that our migrant brothers and sisters may be treated with compassion and mercy.



Country Focus: Syria

Even though Syria makes up less than one percent of the world's population, about one third of the world's refugees are Syrian.

Syria once had a population about the same size as New York state, but after almost a decade of war, more than half of its people have fled the country. Those who still live in Syria have to face many challenges, including the loss of schools, hospitals, and water treatment facilities.

The Church in Syria tries to bear witness to Christ despite facing the many challenges created by war. Made up of six Eastern Rites (Melkite, Armenian, Syrian, Maronite, Latin and Chaldean) all in full communion with Rome, the Church in Syria regularly celebrates the sacraments, even though it is confronted with constant violence.

In order to help the Church in Syria, many Christians around the world have stepped forward to provide assistance and support. Our own archdiocese began a partnership with the Archeparchy of Damascus, Syria, a Maronite Rite Church, in 2017, and we continue to offer our prayers and financial support to help our brothers and sisters in Syria. As you join Pope Francis in prayer this month, think about

how you can help Syrian and other refugees, and share with Christ's compassion and mercy.



Promoting Knowledge of Faith

God's Word for Mission

"This atmosphere of welcoming is increasingly necessary in confronting today's diverse forms of distancing ourselves from others. This is profoundly evidenced in the problem of millions of refugees and exiles, in the [problem] of racial intolerance as well as intolerance toward the person whose only "fault" is a search for work and better living conditions outside his own country, and in the fear of all who are different and thus seen as a threat." (Saint John Paul II, Welcoming the Poor: Reigniting Hope, Origins 27:36, p. 605)

Education for Community Life

Saint Spotlight: Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini



The first U.S. citizen to be canonized a saint was an immigrant from Italy who originally didn't plan to come to America at all. Saint Francis Cabrini wanted to be a missionary to China from a very young age, but when Pope Leo XIII asked her to go "not to the East, but to the West," she obeyed and traveled to the United States to minister to the thousands of Italian immigrants who had recently migrated to the country.

By the time she arrived in New York City, Saint Frances had already spent many years helping others. She worked as a teacher in her native Italy and founded her own religious order, the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, becoming known as Mother Cabrini. Once in New York, she and her sisters established hospitals and orphanages, and organized catechism and education classes for Italian immigrants. Saint Frances spent the rest of her life serving immigrant communities in the United States, traveling all over the country to start institutions to help the poor and sick. In total, she founded 67 institutes dedicated to providing education and healthcare to immigrants living in poverty. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1909 and died in 1917. She was canonized a saint in 1946 by Pope Pius XII. Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini's feast day is November 13. She is the patron saint of immigrants in honor of her dedication, caring and compassionate ministry to their communities.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person



We know from the Catholic Social Teaching theme of Life and Dignity of the Human Person that all human life is sacred because we are all created in the image and likeness of God. All people therefore have an equal right to those things necessary for life: water, food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. The Church teaches that these rights are universal, and should be guaranteed to everyone, including migrants and refugees.

A migrant is someone who moves to a different country in order to create a better life for themselves and their families. People have a right to migrate if they are unable to find work in the country where they were born. A refugee is someone who has to flee their country because it has become unsafe due to war or persecution. Scripture teaches us that migrants and refugees are special

in the eyes of God. Jesus was born a refugee after the Holy Family fled from Herrod, and during His public ministry, Jesus was an itinerant preacher without a permanent home. The Gospel of Matthew instructs us to welcome the stranger (Mt. 25-35). This is why all Catholics are called to care for the needs of migrants and refugees, regardless of their citizenship status. By caring for and welcoming migrants and refugees, we also welcome Christ.

In this month's video, you will hear the story of a Syrian family living as refugees in Europe. As you listen to their story, think about why Pope Francis calls attention to migrants and refugees in his February prayer intention. How does caring for the needs of migrants and refugees help us honor the Life and Dignity of the Human Person?

Syria Family From Aleppo Finds Refuge in Europe: [Click Here](#)>>

1. Have you or someone you know ever had to move to a different city or state? How did it feel?
2. Have you ever met a migrant or refugee? If so, what did you learn from them?
3. How would you feel if you and your family were forced to leave your home because of war or because your parents were unable to find jobs?
4. How can you care for and welcome migrants and refugees in your own community?



Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray that God will inspire all Catholics to take action in their local communities to support and protect migrants.
- ✚ Let us pray for migrants and refugees, that they may feel the warmth of our love.
- ✚ Let us pray for all refugees who are forced to flee their homes, especially those from Syria, that God will bring peace to their countries.
- ✚ Let us pray for our government officials, that they will provide support to migrants and refugees who long for a new beginning.

Lord God,
 You call us to welcome those who come to our land to escape poverty and violence. Help us open our hearts to migrants and refugees in need so that we might see in them your own migrant Son. Give us the courage to defend them against those who would do them harm. We pray this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.