



# Quotes from Pope Francis on Immigration



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## INTRODUCTION

Since his inaugural trip to Lampedusa, Pope Francis has worked to highlight the dignity of migrants. He has consistently spoken out on the plight of immigrants and called people to stand in solidarity with them.

This resource, provided by the **Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.**, was last updated in February 2016. For more resources, visit [cliniclegal.org](http://cliniclegal.org).

“Migrants trust that they will encounter acceptance, solidarity, and help, that they will meet people who will sympathize with the distress and tragedy experienced by others, recognize the values and resources the latter have to offer, and are open to sharing humanly and materially with the needy and disadvantaged.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, October 12, 2012*



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“Migrants and refugees can experience, along with difficulties, new, welcoming relationships which enable them to enrich their new countries with their professional skills, their social and cultural heritage, and not infrequently, their witness of faith, which can bring a new energy and life to communities of ancient and Christian tradition, and invite others to encounter Christ and to come to know the Church.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants  
and Refugees, October 12, 2012*



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“The Church is Mother, and her motherly attention is expressed with special tenderness and closeness to those who are obliged to flee their own country and exist between rootlessness and integration. This tension destroys people. Christian compassion—this ‘suffering with’ compassion—is expressed first of all in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard. They are all elements that dehumanize and must push every Christian and the whole community to concrete attention.”

Pope Francis

*Address to the Participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, May 24, 2013*



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“Immigrants dying at sea, in boats which were vehicles of hope and became vehicles of death. That is how the headlines put it. When I first heard of this tragedy a few weeks ago, and realized that it happens all too frequently, it has constantly come back to me like a painful thorn in my heart. So I felt that I had to come here today, to pray and to offer a sign of my closeness, but also to challenge our consciences lest this tragedy be repeated. Please, let it not be repeated!”

Pope Francis

*Homily at Lampedusa, July 8, 2013*



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“Where is your brother?” His blood cries out to me, says the Lord. This is not a question directed to others; it is a question directed to me, to you, to each of us. These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God! Once again I thank you, the people of Lampedusa, for your solidarity. I recently listened to one of these brothers of ours. Before arriving here, he and the others were at the mercy of traffickers, people who exploit the poverty of others, people who live off the misery of others. How much these people have suffered! Some of them never made it here.”

Pope Francis

*Homily at Lampedusa, July 8, 2013*



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“Despite the problems, risks, and difficulties to be faced, great numbers of migrants and refugees continue to be inspired by confidence and hope; in their hearts they long for a better future, not only for themselves but for their families and those closest to them.”

Pope Francis

*Homily at Lampedusa, July 8, 2013*



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“Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women, and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2014 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 24, 2013*



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“I will also pray in a special way for our brothers and sisters, men, women and children who have died of thirst, hunger or from the exhaustion on the journey to find a better life. In recent days we have seen those terrible images of the desert in the newspapers. Let us all pray in silence for these brothers and sisters of ours.”

Pope Francis

*Angelus, November 1, 2013*



“The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place, or disposable.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2015 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 3, 2014*



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“Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants’ lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2015 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, September 3, 2014*

“It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions for migrants more humane.”

Pope Francis

*Message for the 2015 World Day of Migrants  
and Refugees, September 3, 2014*



"I would also like to draw attention to the tens of thousands of children who migrate alone, unaccompanied, to escape poverty and violence: This is a category of migrants from Central America and Mexico itself who cross the border with the United States under extreme conditions and in pursuit of a hope that in most cases turns out to be vain. They are increasing day by day. This humanitarian emergency requires, as a first urgent measure, these children be welcomed and protected."

Pope Francis

*Papal Message on the occasion of Mexico Holy See colloquium on human migration and development, July 14, 2014*



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“For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.”

Pope Francis

*Laudato Si (#25), June 18, 2015*



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"American Catholics are committed to building a society which is truly tolerant and inclusive, to safeguarding the rights of individuals and communities, and to rejecting every form of unjust discrimination."

Pope Francis

*Speech at the White House of the United States, September 23, 2015*



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As a son of an immigrant family, I am happy to be a guest in this country, which was largely built by such families.”

Pope Francis

*Speech at the White House of the United States, September 23, 2015*



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“We still have time to make the changes needed to bring about ‘a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change’ (Laudato Si’, 13). Such change demands on our part a serious and responsible recognition not only of the kind of world we may be leaving to our children, but also to the millions of people living under a system which has overlooked them. Our common home has been part of this group of the excluded which cries out to heaven and which today powerfully strikes our homes, our cities and our societies. To use a telling phrase of the Reverend Martin Luther King, we can say that we have defaulted on a promissory note and now is the time to honor it.”

Pope Francis

*Speech at the White House of the United States, September 23, 2015*



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“Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.”

Pope Francis

*Address of Pope Francis to a joint meeting of the United States Congress, September 24, 2015*



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“On this continent, too, thousands of persons are led to travel north in search of a better life for themselves and for their loved ones, in search of greater opportunities. Is this not what we want for our own children? We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal.”

Pope Francis

*Address of Pope Francis to a joint meeting of the United States Congress, September 24, 2015*



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“[W]hen the stranger in our midst appeals to us, we must not repeat the sins and the errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible, as we educate new generations not to turn their back on our “neighbors” and everything around us.”

Pope Francis

*Address of Pope Francis to a joint meeting of the United States Congress, September 24, 2015*



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“Closeness to the poor, the refugee, the immigrant, the sick, the exploited, the elderly living alone, prisoners and all God’s other poor, will teach us a different way of resting, one which is more Christian and generous.”

Pope Francis

*Homily at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, September 24, 2015*



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"I know that it is not easy to have to move and find a new home, new neighbors and new friends. The good thing is that we also make new friends. We meet people who open doors for us, who are kind to us. They offer us friendship and understanding, and they try to help us not to feel like strangers. To feel at home."

Pope Francis

*Address to children at Our Lady Queen of Angels School,  
New York, September 25, 2015*



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“Many of you have emigrated to this country at great personal cost, but in the hope of building a new life. Do not be discouraged by whatever challenges and hardships you face. I ask you not to forget that, like those who came here before you, you bring many gifts to your new nation... By contributing your gifts, you will not only find your place here, you will help to renew society from within.”

Pope Francis

*Address at Independence Mall, Philadelphia, September 26, 2015*



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"Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unjust distribution of the planet's resources which are meant to be equitably shared by all. Don't we all want a better, more decent and prosperous life to share with our loved ones?"

Pope Francis

*Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 17, 2016*



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“The church stands at the side of all who work to defend each person’s right to live with dignity, first and foremost by exercising the right not to emigrate and to contribute to the development of one’s country of origin.”

Pope Francis

*Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, January 17, 2016*



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