



Putting Ourselves with Jesus in the Midst of Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees

Music suggestions:

“When I needed a neighbor” by Sydney Carter.

Ambiance suggestions:

Candle(s), newspaper clipping(s) about refugees seeking and receiving shelter, a copy of Matthew 25:40-46, photo of Planet Earth, small globe.



Readings:

We recognize that the social, political, economic and environmental problems of our century are global in nature and are integrally intertwined. We therefore pledge ourselves to seek and participate in collaborative structures, relationships and actions that will liberate life where it is threatened.

(SNJM 34th Chapter Acts, page 5)

Excerpt from homily of Pope Francis for the 21st annual World Day for Consecrated Life (Feb. 2, 2017): We are heirs to the dreams of our elders, heirs to the hope that did not disappoint our founding mothers and fathers, our older brothers and sisters. We are heirs to those who have gone before us and had the courage to dream. Like them, we too want to sing, “God does not deceive; hope in him does not disappoint.” God comes to meet his people. And we want to sing by taking up the prophecy of Joel and making it our own: “I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions” (Book of the Prophet Joel 2:28).

We do well to take up the dreams of our elders, so that we can prophesy in our day and once more encounter what originally set our hearts afire. Dreams and prophecies go together: The remembrance of how our elders, our fathers and mothers, dreamed, and the courage prophetically to carry on those dreams.

This attitude will make us fruitful. Most importantly, it will protect us from a temptation that can make our consecrated life barren: the temptation of survival. An evil that can gradually take root within us and within our communities. The mentality of survival makes us reactionaries, fearful, slowly and silently shutting ourselves up in our houses and in our own preconceived notions. It makes us look back, to the glory days – days that are past – and rather than rekindling the prophetic creativity born of our founders’ dreams, it looks for shortcuts in order to evade the

challenges knocking on our doors today. A survival mentality robs our charisms of power, because it leads us to “domesticate” them, to make them “user-friendly,” robbing them of their original creative force. It makes us want to protect spaces, buildings and structures, rather than to encourage new initiatives. The temptation of survival makes us forget grace; it turns us into professionals of the sacred but not fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters of that hope to which we are called to bear prophetic witness. An environment of survival withers the hearts of our elderly, taking away their ability to dream. In this way, it cripples the prophecy that our young are called to proclaim and work to achieve. In a word, the temptation of survival turns what the Lord presents as an opportunity for mission into something dangerous, threatening, potentially disastrous. This attitude is not limited to the consecrated life, but we in particular are urged not to fall into it.

Let us go back to the Gospel to contemplate that scene. When the parents of Jesus brought the Child to the Temple to present him according to the law, the song of Simeon and Anna was not the fruit of self-absorption or an analysis and review of their personal situation. It did not ring out because they were caught up in themselves and were worried that something bad might happen to them. Their song was born of hope. Mary let Simeon take the Son of the Promise into his arms. Whenever Mary puts Jesus in the midst of his people, they encounter joy. For this alone will bring back our joy and hope, this alone will save us from living in a survival mentality. Only this will make our lives fruitful and keep our hearts alive: putting Jesus where he belongs, in the midst of his people. Putting Jesus in the midst of his people means having a contemplative heart, one capable of discerning how God is walking through the street of our cities, towns and neighborhoods and to put ourselves with Jesus in the midst of his people. It means wanting to touch the wounds of Jesus in the wounds of a world in pain which longs and cries out for healing. (Paragraph adapted/shortened)

To put ourselves with Jesus in the midst of his people! Not as religious “activists” but as men and women who are constantly forgiven, men and women anointed in baptism and sent to share that anointing and the consolation of God with everyone.

Let us accompany Jesus as he goes forth to meet his people, to be in the midst of his people. Let us go forth, not with the complaining or anxiety of those who have forgotten how to prophesy because they failed to take up the dreams of their elders, but with serenity and songs of praise. Not with apprehension but with the patience of those who trust in the Spirit, the Lord of dreams and prophecy. In this way, let us share what is truly our own: the hymn that is born of hope.

Reflection questions:

From the challenge of Pope Francis – “With a ‘contemplative heart,’ put Jesus in the midst of his people walking through the streets of our cities, towns, neighborhoods, our two countries.” What do you visualize as Jesus’ reactions, words and actions on behalf of immigrants, migrants, refugees, the “undocumented?”

Concerning Pope Francis’ challenges to those “in consecrated life:” What are your reactions to these many challenges? What challenges do you personally find pertain to our SNJM Congregation and for what reasons do you choose these particular challenges?

Time for reflection/sharing

Invitation to share these reflections.



Litany of the Displaced: Refugees, Immigrants, Migrants

God of all people
We bring before you
All who work for the fullness of Justice
All who long for the widening of welcoming
to which your Word calls us.
(RESPONSE) *Open hearts, open arms, open
doors in welcome!*

Displaced God
Born in flight to parents anxious and weary
Born anew in those who flee oppression and
danger,
Leaving home and loved ones behind
And staking their lives on the hope of
abundant life
We pray: *Open hearts, open arms, open
doors in welcome!*

Journeying God
Turned away over and over again
By our world's collective fear of the
stranger,
We pray: *Open hearts, open arms, open
doors in welcome!*

Uprooted God

Suspended in the
endless uncertainty
that is the daily life of the migrant,
We pray: *Open hearts, open arms, open
doors in welcome!*

Waiting God
Waiting today with all who suffer separation
from home and the familiar,
Waiting for an end to danger
We pray: *Open hearts, open arms, open
doors in welcome!*

God of all people
Stir us to holy anger
Over the wounds of our world
Move us to actions for justice
Until the fullness of welcome is fulfilled
In our midst
And the problems that cause migration – the
Poverty, the fear, and the suffering –
Are confronted by all
People of good will
And transformed
By the power of compassion. Amen!

From Chris Koellhoffer, IHM – “Education for Justice”
Adapted by the Office for Immigrant Affairs and Immigration Education: a 29-page booklet of Prayers and
Intentions for Immigrants and Immigration Reform for Parish Use,
Compiled by the Archdiocese of Chicago
<http://archchicago.org/Immigration>

Intercessory prayers:

(RESPONSE) *Lord, hear our cry for your grace.*

1. Lord, amid the troubles of our world, our countries, our cities, our towns and our
neighbourhoods, bring your love, peace, compassion and hope through our actions.
We pray to the Lord...

2. Lord, help us to inspire and educate for creating communities of welcoming for refugees, migrants and immigrants
We pray to the Lord...

3. Lord, be by our side as we take up the challenge of Pope Francis to – “With a ‘contemplative heart,’ put Jesus in the midst of his people walking through the streets of our cities, towns, neighborhoods, our two countries.” Help us to know your reactions, words and actions on behalf of immigrants, migrants, refugees, the “undocumented.” We pray to the Lord...

4. Lord, grant us your grace to be catalysts for change from hate and fear to your call to love and to bring hope to our troubled world and communities within our influence.
We pray to the Lord...

Lord God, our world needs your light. Guide us in our efforts to spread your light. Amen.

Closing prayer:

Mary, together with Joseph and the child Jesus, you experienced the suffering of exile. You were forced to flee to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod. Today, we entrust the men, women and children who live as migrants, undocumented immigrants and refugees to your maternal protection.

We ask for the grace to welcome them with Christian hospitality, so that these brothers and sisters of ours may find acceptance and understanding on their journey. Teach us to recognize your Son...

- in the migrant worker who labors to bring food to our tables and whose human rights are often not respected.
- in the refugee seeking protection from persecution.
- in the woman and child who are victims of human trafficking.
- in the asylum seeker imprisoned for fleeing without documents.

May all those who are far from their place of birth find in us a place where no one is a stranger. We ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

“We affirm our deep concern for those whose lack of resources and opportunities consigns them to the peripheries of society. We commit ourselves to examine our own complicity in these global problems, to live in even greater solidarity with marginalized peoples, and to confront the forces that perpetuate their marginalization.”

—SNJM 34th Chapter Acts, page 5

Adapted from:
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Inc. 2006
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Prayer service created by: Helen Petrimoulx, SNJM

The Spiritual Ministries Network of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) provides a variety of prayer services for personal and group spiritual nourishment. May your prayer life draw you closer to the Divine.

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