Did you know . . .

104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018

Today, January 14, is the ***104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.*** The situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty has been of particular concern to Pope Francis.

In his message on this topic, he says, "Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (*Matthew* 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church's motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate."*

Welcoming means offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally, keeping their personal safety foremost and finding dignified initial accommodation for all.

Protecting includes steps to defend the dignity and rights of migrants and refugees, independent of their legal status.

Promoting means a "determined effort to ensure that all migrants and refugees – as well as the communities which welcome them – are empowered to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions which constitute the humanity intended by the Creator."

Integrating concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment, helping them keep their own cultural identity while integrating into their destination country.

Each of these verbs is explained more deeply in the Pope's complete "Message".

May God protect all migrants and refugees from all the dangers that surround them.

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