

112th World Day of
Migrants and Refugees

Even Just One of These Children

Mt 18:10

On 11 August, on the feast day of
Saint Clare of Assisi,
Pope Leo issued this message
for the 112th World Day of
Refugees and Migrants.

Here are a few excerpts

www.vatican.va

Each year the World Day of Migrants and Refugees invites us to turn our attention to different aspects of the complex phenomenon of migration. For this 112th World Day, the theme, “Even just one of these children,” draws our attention to the minors directly involved in the experience of migration and flight, to the care owed to them, and to the Lord’s promise that “whoever receives one such child in my name receives me” (Mk 9:37).

Minors are the most vulnerable group within the global movements of migration. They are concrete faces, who have unique stories, and call on our conscience. Every year, millions of children and adolescents are forced to leave their homeland because of war, poverty, violence, environmental disasters and other tragedies. Sadly, their number continues to grow.

To this already appalling situation are added further tra-

gedies: deaths along migration routes, trafficking and exploitation, the recruitment of minors for use in armed conflicts, sexual violence, forced marriages, and the atrocities they have suffered or witnessed during their travels. Their dignity is trampled upon in countless ways.

Even just one of these children calls us, in the life of the Church, to transform welcoming from an abstract concept into a stable pastoral practice.

Even just one of these children, within the horizon of the different religions, reminds us that the vulnerability of the young knows no religious boundaries and unites us in a shared humanitarian and spiritual responsibility.

Even just one of these children calls each one of us, in our personal lives, to open our eyes and heart to a profound listening to his or her story, fears and dreams, overcoming that detachment which reduces the human person to a statistic that does not directly concern us. It is an invitation to recognize the dignity of each child, even before considering the condition of being a “migrant,” and to safeguard his or her fundamental rights: the right to life, education and a standard of living that enables full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Even just one of these children, in the context of civil institutions, calls us to reaffirm the principle of the best interests of the child.

Let us entrust migrant and refugee children to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, together with Saint Joseph and the child Jesus experienced the cruelty of Herod’s violence and the tragedy of exile in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:13-15). May she accompany their steps and help our communities to become living and credible signs of the Gospel.



Diocese of Hearst-Moosonee

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Bishop

Sylvie Vallée
Bursar

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diocesedehearst@gmail.com



www.hearstmoosonee.ca



Diocese Hearst Moosonee



[pierreolivier.tremblay](https://www.facebook.com/pierreolivier.tremblay)



Diocese Hearst Moosonee



Box 1330, Hearst, ON P0L 1N0



705-362-4903