

# Toward a Better World

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## CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: Every one of us has, at one time or another, been a stranger in a strange land or has ancestors who moved to a new land as immigrants. We carry in our hearts stories of struggle and rejection, even as we share stories of achievement and success in the new place. Pope Francis has drawn attention to the plight of immigrants throughout the world and denounced what he calls the “globalization of indifference.” He calls us all to welcome and respect immigrants and not treat them as “pawns on the chessboard of humanity.” Today let us pray and reflect on these children, women and men who leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but, above all, for being more.

## READING 1 *Matthew 25:35-40*

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him and say, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?” And the king will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”

## READING 2

*(From the message of Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees)*

Not infrequently, the arrival of migrants, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees gives rise to suspicion and hostility. There is a fear that society will become less secure, that identity and culture will be lost, that competition for jobs will become stiffer and even that criminal activity will increase. ... A

change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization — all typical of a throwaway culture — towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world.

*(Silent reflection)*

## RESPONSE

*Psalm 142 (Alternate sides)*

With full voice I cry to the Lord; with full voice I beseech the Lord. Before God I pour out my complaint, lay bare my distress. My spirit is faint within me, but you know my path.

*Along the way I walk they have hidden a trap for me. I look to my right hand, but no friend is there. There is no escape for me; no one cares for me.*

I cry out to you, Lord, I say, You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Listen to my cry for help, for I am brought very low.

*Rescue me from my pursuers, for they are too strong for me. Lead me out of my prison, that I may give thanks to your name. Then the just shall gather around me because you have been good to me.*

## CONCLUDING PRAYER

ALL: Lord God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to approach one another as brothers and sisters, to face one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual compassion and respect to achieve a better world. We pray as your sons and daughters, heirs of your eternal kingdom. Amen.

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