

Magisterium of the Church towards refugees and migration (1965-2020)

The thesis is inspired by the constant increase in the number of migrants and refugees in the world every year. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced people in the world at the end of 2020, more than a quarter of whom are refugees. This number has doubled since 2010. In my dissertation, I intend to show that the refugee issue is a moral problem, because every refugee deprived of humane living conditions and every lost migrant is a human being with his own rights. Undoubtedly, the refugee problem will not end if states continue to arm themselves and start wars. That is why I wanted to present the papal messages prepared annually (since the early 1980s) for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which remind us of the indelible dignity of migrants and refugees, asking for respect and support for those arriving, especially those fleeing war, persecution or poverty.

Since the end of the Second Vatican Council, the Church, through the actions of popes and the Holy See, has been increasing its involvement in work for migrants and refugees, emphasizing their humanity and inalienable rights to life, as well as making decisions about a place to live on their own.

The aim of the thesis is to analyze the reaction of popes to the phenomenon of migration along with changes in migration in the world, focused on four thematic areas: reception, protection, promotion and integration (see: Document of the Dicastery for Integral Human Development "Responding to refugees and immigrants: twenty points of action"). Pope Francis on the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2018, said: „Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating”.

The research questions in my dissertation are as follows:

1. How has the perception of the problem of migrants and refugees in the Holy See changed over the years based on the speeches of popes on the occasion of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in the years 1965-2020, as well as documents of the Magisterium of the Church issued after the Second Vatican Council?
2. What do successive popes also expect from the international community?

3. How has the reaction of the popes and the Holy See evolved in connection with the changes in the world, the quantity and quality of migration and refugees?

Research on refugees and migrants was initially undertaken by anthropology, sociology and law, and then by the sciences of international relations. At that time, the political aspects of exile, foreign and domestic policy, as well as international and national security were studied. Human rights have been emphasized more and more. Subsequently, the issue of solving the problem of refugees and migrations found itself in the research circle of other scientific disciplines, such as Catholic Social Science.

Sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, economists, lawyers and canonists, moralists and theologians meet and compare their knowledge and experiences to, together with priests, contribute to deepening the understanding of the phenomenon of migration and refugee, and then indicate the appropriate tools to help them.

The Holy See has adopted institutional religious, social and cultural solutions for the care of migrants, but nevertheless focuses on anthropological concepts.

Each discipline has its own work methodology. The anthropological aspect included in the Catholic Social Teaching sciences, using its own method. The thesis will try to reconstruct and recreate the content of the proper Catholic Social Teaching method: to see, evaluate and act (what directives to act have been and are being constructed).

The thesis has not only a historical dimension, but due to the dynamics of the migration and refugee issue, it can be food for thought, e.g. for priests, politicians and local government officials.

My dissertation is in the field of Catholic Social Teaching, but it is also open to interdisciplinarity.

The thesis has been divided into 7 chapters:

Chapters 1-2: introductory, historical

Chapters 3-6: refer to four actions: receive, protect, promote, integrate. Inside, each chapter is in chronological order

Chapter 7: summarizing, showing a perspective image