



December 28, 2025

Christmas Time: the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt and stay there until I tell you..."

Matthew 2:13



Dear Friends,

In his message for the 111th **World Day of Migrants and Refugees** (2025) Pope Leo XIV wrote: *"The current context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which forces millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere...it is important that there be a growing desire in people's hearts for a future of peace and of respect for the dignity of all. Such a future is essential to God's plan for humanity and the rest of Creation."*

Jesus was a migrant in our world. He left the homeland of heaven to be a missionary of hope. He calls us all to journey with him to a renewed world of justice and peace. Jesus with his family of Joseph and Mary knew the experience of being displaced by the violence of an unhinged authoritarian, King Herod. Herod alerted by the Magi that a new king was born was threatened by a child! So, he sought to destroy this threat. In a dream Joseph is warned of the impending violence.

Like any protective father throughout the world, Joseph takes his family to the safety of another country. Can you imagine the courage it takes to get up in the middle of the night to flee certain death? Then to set out on a journey to a place they have never been. They do not speak the language. He will have to find work to support his family not knowing the culture. Joseph, like millions of migrants and refugees today, had to have an abundance of strength. They would return home. And Jesus would lead us all on the immigrant journey to a land of new life.

The story of the Holy Family reflects the story of their ancient ancestors. Eleven of his sons and the patriarch, Israel, ended up in Egypt. There was a terrible famine. The only place that had food was Egypt which was blessed with the Nile River. It kept the land fertile and irrigated. One of the brothers, who also was named Joseph, due to circumstances (that's another story) had already been living in Egypt. He had worked his way up to being an advisor of the Pharaoh. Pharaoh put this Joseph in charge of taking care of the refugees coming into Egypt. In this position Joseph was able to reconnect with his family.

Years later the descendants of Israel became numerous. There was a new Pharaoh who was not welcoming of the Israelite immigrants. This Pharaoh was a paranoid tyrant, who like Herod, was threatened by newcomers. He orders the death of all male Israelite infants. Later one of those children would escape death and be raised in the Pharaoh's household. This child named Moses will eventually confront the injustice of the Egyptians. He will lead the Israelites on a new immigrant journey. God will lead them to a place all their own. But God will warn them, *"Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt."* (Exodus 22:21)

Pope Leo, in a message to refugees and migrants, states; *"In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Their courage and tenacity bear heroic testimony to a faith that sees beyond what our eyes can see and gives them the strength to defy death on the various contemporary migration routes."* The pope notes that migrants and refugees are a reminder to the Church that we have no permanent home here. We are pilgrims *"perpetually journeying towards [our] final homeland sustained by hope..."* Let us never forget that in this world we are all foreigners. We are looking for home!

Peace,

Fr Ron

Esta carta está en español en el sitio web: www.anne.church