



The Holy See

BENEDICT XVI

ANGELUS

*St Peter's Square
Sunday, 17 January 2010*

(Video)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday we are celebrating the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The Church has been constantly present beside these people in time, achieving unique goals in the past century: it suffices to think of Bl. Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini and St Frances Cabrini. In my [Message](#) for the occasion I called attention to migrant and refugee minors. Jesus Christ, who as a newborn infant lived the dramatic experience of the refugee because of Herod's threats, taught his disciples to welcome children with great respect and love. Indeed, whatever the nationality and the colour of their skin, children too must be considered first and foremost and always as people, images of God, to be encouraged and protected against all marginalization and exploitation. In particular, it is necessary to take every care to ensure that minors who find themselves living in a foreign country are protected by legislation and, above all, accompanied in the innumerable problems they have to face. While I warmly encourage Christian communities and the organizations committed to serving minor migrants and refugees, I urge everyone to keep alive an educational and cultural sensitivity to them, in accordance with the authentic spirit of the Gospel.

This afternoon, almost 24 years after the Venerable [John Paul II](#)'s historic Visit, I shall be going to the Great Synagogue of Rome, known as the "Tempio Maggiore" (Major Temple), to meet the Jewish Community of the city and take a further step on the journey of harmony and friendship between Catholics and Jews. In fact, in spite of the problems and difficulties, there is a climate of deep respect and dialogue among the believers of both religions that testifies to how our relations

have developed and to the common commitment to recognize what unites us: faith in the one God, first of all, but also the safeguard of life and of the family, and the aspiration to social justice and peace.

Lastly, I recall that the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will begin tomorrow. Every year it constitutes for all who believe in Christ a propitious time for reviving the ecumenical spirit, meeting, getting to know one another, praying and reflecting together. The biblical theme, from St Luke's Gospel, echoes the words of the Risen Jesus to the Apostles: "You are witnesses of these things" (Lk 24: 48). Our proclamation of Christ's Gospel will be all the more credible and effective the more closely we are united in his love, like true brothers. I therefore invite parishes, religious communities, associations and ecclesial movements to pray ceaselessly, especially during the Eucharistic celebrations, for the full unity of Christians.

Let us entrust these three intentions our brother and sister migrants and refugees, religious dialogue with the Jews and Christian unity to the maternal intercession of Mary Most Holy, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church.

After the Angelus:

Our thoughts in these days turn to the beloved peoples of Haiti and become a heartfelt prayer. The Apostolic Nuncio, who thanks be to God is well, keeps me constantly informed and thus I learned of the sorrowful death of the Archbishop, as well as that of many priests, religious and seminarians. I am following and encourage the efforts of the many charitable organizations which are trying to meet the country's immense needs. I pray for the injured, for the homeless and for all who have tragically lost their lives.

On this World Day of Migrants and Refugees, I am pleased to greet the representatives of diverse ethnic communities who are gathered here. I hope they may all participate fully in social and ecclesial life, preserving the values of their original cultures. I also greet the Brazilians who are descendents of emigrants from the Trentino. Thank you for coming!

To the English-speaking visitors and pilgrims here today, I extend heartfelt greetings. In particular I welcome the students from the "Catholic Studies Program" at Loras College, Dubuque, in the United States. In today's Gospel we hear how Jesus let his glory be seen by turning water into wine. May all of you discover the transforming power of his love in your lives, so that his glory may be manifested today to those around you. Upon all who are present, and upon your families and loved ones, I invoke God' abundant Blessings.

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