booklets

SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF A PILGRIM

Towards a Theology of Migrations

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INTRODUCTION

The reality of migration, as a sign of the times, needs to be approached in depth by theological reflection. The Theology of Migration is a discipline that has become an issue in theological reflection over the last decades, but finds its roots in the origins and comprehension of the *People of God* and, in a sense, in the dawn of mankind. This pilgrimage permeates the Holy Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium of the Church.

The Bible is recognized as a moving reality with migratory experiences, exile, shelter and hospitality, all of which are inserted in the founding experience of God's chosen people: "My father was a wandering Aramaean" (Dt 26,5). In the same way, the New Testament, where Jesus presents himself as a migrant, puts the accent on acceptance and fraternity, universalism and an apostolic life in motion that crosses borders.

During the first centuries, Patristic tradition began a theological reflection on acceptance and Christian hospitality amongst other topics. Initially, various Apostolic Fathers and, later, Apologist Fathers reflected on migrations from different points of view: the Epistle to Diognetus, Clement of Rome, Didache, Origins, Lactantius, Basil, Aristides, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nissa and Ambrose of Milan. "They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers." (Epistle to Diognetus 5,1.5)

In the same way, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church focuses on the

reality of migration, but it is not until the nineteenth century that it is treated in a special way. From Leo XIII to Pope Francis, son of a migrant family, the Magisterium of the Church has accompanied reality with pain and suffering but has also presented the richness and hope that migrants provide. The centrality of migrants in Pope Francis' magisterium is significant.

The actual situation of migration and refuge at a global level along with the call to take a closer look to this reality puts us at a crossroads about identity, dignity, justice, hospitality and integrality.

Who is my family? How has God created us? When did we see you a stranger and made you welcome? Who does Jesus share table with? Is everything connected? All these questions continue challenging and encouraging our way of understanding and approaching the migratory reality.

1. CONSIDERING THE PHENOMENON OF MIGRATION AS A "SIGN OF THE TIMES"

The same Jesus, with the People of God, continues the pilgrimage that started many centuries ago and is reflected in the historical development of the concept of "theology."

A theoretical point of view leads us from Anselm's definition of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum* to a modern concept: critical reflection about historical practice in the light of the Word of God.[1] Centuries of pilgrimage and theological comprehension have helped us to broaden our view and to grow in greater depth to understand Jesus' Revelation, while trying to render an account of our faith. This comprehension has a close relationship with human experience as a subject of in-depth theological reflection. Karl Rahner suggests that the knowledge of the transcendent and mysterious God is possible due to human experience: "Only something that has been experienced, lived and suffered provides a knowledge that suffers no deception, ending in boredom and oblivion, but fills the heart with knowledge, wisdom and experimented love. My heart and spirit must be filled with what has been lived and experimented rather than with what has been excogitated. And all the knowledge acquired through the study is only a small help for the experience of life, which is the only thing that provides knowledge in order to face the world with an awakened and prepared spirit."[2]

Other authors such as Stephen B. Bevans, have affirmed that one cannot speak about theology in abstract and defend a Contextual Theology, which can only be understood and reflected from a faith that is incarnated in a

specific vital and cultural context. For this author, the contextualisation of theology is not an option which only concerns people in the Third World but a real theological imperative that is grounded in the basis of theology.[3] "When we recognise the importance of the context for theology, we also recognise the absolute importance of the context for the development of Scriptures and Tradition. The writings of the Scriptures and the content, practices and sense of tradition do not just come from heaven. They themselves are a product of human beings and their contexts."[4]

Thus, in every period of history, our Church and its theologies have been influenced by diverse contexts traversed by different ways of thinking and cultural traditions. Therefore, we cannot talk about theology obviating its historical evolution, a process marked by its constant construction: "If we look back to the first theologians after the New Testament era, we find that they tried to give faith a sense but within the dominant and widely disseminated Hellenistic culture. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, used the stoic vision; Origins used Plato's thought and Augustine was strongly influenced both by Plato and the Neo-Platonists of his time."[5]

If the actual theological reflection really aims to be meaningful for believers, it cannot ignore the geographical, historical and cultural diversity that characterises our world and our Church. "What seems clear, in any case, is that a quick glance to the history of theology reveals that there has never been an original theology founded in an ivory tower, without any kind of reference or dependence to a particular event, the ways of thinking or the culture of its time and place."[6]

If we approach theology from an epistemological perspective, we can state that it shares the same objectives as human and natural science but with a different methodology and scope of application.[7] Theology analyses social reality in a critical way through the primary referent of the Divine Revelation, with the aim to witness our faith and hope (1Pe 3,15).

In recent times, the world is living the dramatic reality of forced migration and refuge. Nowadays, there are about 232 million migrants, which is equivalent to the fifth most populous country in the world. Over 65 million people are forced to leave their homes due to armed conflicts, generalised violence or natural disasters. Of these, 21 million are refugees; 38 million are internally displaced and 3.2 million are asylum applicants. Sadly, the Mediterranean Sea has become the greatest cemetery in the world, where more than 5,000 people lost their lives in 2016. Syria is the country with the highest number of asylum applicants and internally displaced people, followed by Afghanistan, Somalia and Southern Sudan. Far from what is thought in western countries, developing countries are the most supportive and receive an 86% of worldwide refugees. The countries that hold the highest proportion of refugees are Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan and Kenya.[8]

There is an important debate amongst the public about the tragedy of forced migrants and refugees. Somehow, we are living a historical

crossroads where migratory flows and humanitarian emergencies are raising questions about our way of life, how we understand international relations, how we manage diversity in our societies and how we respond to the dramatic situation of families which knock on our doors.[9] How long can we keep an economic system that allows the mobility of capitals and financial flows but blocks the movement of people? Is it viable to maintain a productive system that exhausts the natural resources of the poor and produces serious consequences in our planet? Is it feasible to support a system which reinforces authoritarism in southern countries and powers armed conflicts to keep a high standard of living in the West? Is it viable if it leads us to close our eyes and borders to the millions of people who knock on our doors escaping from these natural disasters, wars and situations which make a human and dignified life impossible? How are we answering to the progressive ageing of our societies and the diversity of the population in Europe and the West? Are we waiting for conflicts to arise before investing in integration?[10] Shall we continue feeding our fears and building higher borders? When are we going to reformulate in this context the way of understanding citizenship, social policies and nation states?

Given this context, how are we Christians responding to these issues and, especially, to the needs of those who are forced to leave their homes all over the world? There are several studies about migration flows from a socio-political, cultural, psychological perspective, but rather few from a theological or pastoral vision. This scarce presence within theological reflection does not appear to be in line with the abundant presence of migration in the Bible.

We can find histories about human mobility from its beginnings: the call of Abraham; the exodus from Egypt;, the people of Israel wandering through the desert experiencing exile; the flight into Egypt of the Holy Family or the Church's missionary activity. In short, the identity of the People of God is intrinsically related to the history of displaced people and communities, as well as to pilgrimage and hospitality. Some theologians maintain that "migration is important to understand the human condition, religious practice and Christian identity."[11]

This way, the migratory phenomenon, like other relevant issues about human nature, represents an element that must be taken into account for a serious and rigorous theological reflection. Migrations constitute a real "sign of the times"[12] with a structural character in our global world, as reflected in the encyclical *Gaudium et Spes*,[13] which requires an in-depth reflection in the light of faith.[14] Some theologians have described migration as the human face of globalisation.[15] This way of making theology is known as the Theology of Migrations, which finds its origins in the beginnings of the Church and, in some way, in the origins of humanity, even though its importance on the whole theological reflection does not have a strong tradition. This process or pilgrimage permeates the Holy Scriptures, tradition and the Magisterium of the Church.

2. THE BIBLE AS A MOVING REALITY

The Bible presents migration as a common element in the history of salvation. In biblical texts the People of God is introduced as a pilgrim people.

2.1. The Old Testament: "My father was a wandering Aramaean" (Dt 26,5)

In the Old Testament we can find abundant doctrine and praxis about migration and people on the move. On one hand, along with children and widows, migrants represent the typical trilogy of marginalized people in Israel. God desires for them a dignified and respectful attention. On the other hand, Israel, God's People, not only has a first-hand knowledge of this phenomenon but is constituted as a migrant people: "My father was a wandering Aramaean" (Dt 26,5). "You know how an alien feels, for you yourselves were once aliens in Egypt" (Ex 23, 9). Israel's founding period has two key milestones in two migratory movements: the exile to Egypt (Gn 42,1-8) and the Exodus into the Promised Land (Ex 33,1-3). Israel's code of conduct prohibits the oppression, exploitation and the violation of a migrant's rights: "You will not oppress the alien" (Ex 23,9). "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him" (Lv 19,33). "Let him live with you wherever he chooses, in any one of your communities that pleases him. Do not molest him" (Dt 23,17). "You shall not violate the rights of the alien"

(Dt 24,17). "Cursed be he who violates the rights of the alien" (Dt 27,19).

Besides the codes of conduct, there is an enriching experience and a positive attitude towards migrants. In later periods, foreign residents were granted some rights that almost turned them into members of the community, even in access to land ownership: "You shall distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You shall allot it as inheritances for yourselves and for the aliens residing in your midst who have bred children among you. The latter shall be to you like native Israelites; along with you, they shall receive inheritances among the tribes of Israel" (Ez 47,21-22). There is also an attitude of love towards foreigners: "So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt" (Dt 10,19). "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself" (Lev 19,34). Accordingly, love turns into sharing: "When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf there, you shall not go back to get it; let it be for the alien, the orphan or the widow" (Dt 24,17).

2.2. The New Testament: Jesus, the migrant

The New Testament takes the Old Testament to its fulfilment (cfr. Mt 5,17-19). One of the main elements of the New Testament, from a migratory point of view, is the fact that Jesus himself appears as a migrant. Mathew shows Jesus' childhood and the Holy Family in a situation of forced migration (Mt 2,14-15). In his account of the birth of Jesus, Luke tells that it took place outside the city "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2,7).

In the foreigner, the Christian sees not simply a neighbour, but the face of Christ himself, who was born in a manger and fled to Egypt, where he was a foreigner, summing up and repeating in His own life the basic experience of His people (cf. Mt 2,13ff). Born away from home and coming from another land (cf. Lk 2,4-7), "and dwelt amongst us" (Jn 1,11.14) and spent His public life on the move, going through towns and villages (cf. Lk 13,22; Mt 9,35). Once risen, but still an unknown foreigner, He appeared on the way to Emmaus to two of His disciples, who only recognised Him at the breaking of the bread (cf. Lk 24,35). So Christians are followers of a man on the move "who has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt 8,20; Lc 9,58). (*Erga migrantes caritas Christi, 15*).

His public life is a permanent pilgrimage through the cities around the Sea of Galilee, and especially round Capernaum, without forgetting his trips to Tyre and Sidon, in the north; Galilee in the south; the Decapolis, in the east, and beyond the river Jordan, to Perea. His experience of helplessness allows Jesus to put the accent on acceptance and fraternity, identifying himself with the smallest and turning migrants in to a sign of His Kingdom: "For I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25,35).

Another element of Jesus' message is universalism: the coming of a Kingdom for all, without exclusion and with an emphasis on pagans and foreigners. This characteristic becomes

an essential component in the healings: the Good Samaritan (Lk 10,25-37), the Syrophoenician woman (Mc 7,24-30), the centurion (Mt 8,5-10) and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4,5-42), amongst others. Jesus' mission crosses the borders of Israel and the action of the Spirit pushes Him to take the Good News to every corner of the world. His followers perpetuated this universalism. Paul, for example, said: "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ" (Gal 3,28).

3. APOSTOLIC TRADITION, FATHERS OF THE CHURCH AND MIGRATION

In Patristic Tradition we can find an emerging reflection about human mobility (1st to 8th centuries). Initially, various Apostolic Fathers and, later, Apologist Fathers reflected on migrations from different points of view: the Epistle to Diognetus, Clement of Rome, Didache, Origins, Lactantius, Basil, Aristides, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nissa and Ambrose of Milan. “They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers.” (Epistle to Diognetus 5,1.5).

In Origins’ commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, we are asked to stay solicitous and to exercise hospitality: “When saying we should exercise hospitality (Rm 12,13) he means not only that we should welcome the guest who comes to us but also that we should go to find him. We ought to be solicitous, we should examine and ask everywhere, in case he is in a public place and has nowhere to sleep.”[16]

In the 4th Century, John Chrysostom emphasises hospitality above other material needs: “Think that about Christ. He is a wanderer, in need of a roof; meanwhile, you entertain yourself garnishing floors, walls and the capitals on the columns and hanging golden lamps...You can be deprived of all these treasures but whatever you do for your hungry neighbour, a migrant or the naked, not even the devil himself will be able to take it from you.”[17]

For his part, Saint Ambrose of Milan makes some considerations about migrants that could well be affirmed in our days: “But they too, who forbid the city to strangers cannot have our approval.

They would expel them at the very time when they ought to help, and separate them from the trade of their common parent. They would refuse them a share in the produce meant for all, and avert the intercourse that has already begun; and they are unwilling, in a time of necessity, to give those with whom they have enjoyed their rights in common, a share in what they themselves have."[18]

Saint Augustine says that hospitality enriches both the hosted and the host: "Don't ever be proud because you give something to the poor; Christ was poor. Don't ever be proud because you welcome a stranger; Christ was a stranger. The one welcomed is better than the one providing the welcome; the one receiving is richer than the one handing out. The one who was receiving was the owner of everything; the one who was giving had received what he was giving from the one he was giving it to. So don't ever be proud, my brothers and sisters, when you give something to a poor person. Don't ever say in your heart, "I'm giving, he's receiving; I'm giving him a welcome, he's in need of shelter. Perhaps what you're in need of is rather more than that. Perhaps the one you are giving a welcome to is a just man; he's in need of bread, you of truth; he's in need of shelter, you of heaven; he's in need of money, you of justice."[19]

St. Augustine even questioned his migrant condition, in the world we inhabit and which belongs to all: "What stranger is there to take in, where all live in their own country?"[20]

4. MIGRATIONS, AN ECCLESIAL CHALLENGE: THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHURCH

Even though we can find the Church's commitment on immigrants along its history, it is not until the 19th century that the Magisterium pays special attention to the subject.

Leo XIII was the first pope to dedicate a specific document to migrations and authorised the constitution of national parishes, societies and patronages in favour of emigrants through his encyclical *Quam aerumnosa*. His successors continued in this way and instituted specific Catholic works for migrants. Pius X stressed the role of home dioceses in this service, while Benedict XV and Pius XI underscored the responsibility of local churches regarding the welcoming of migrants. In 1914, under Benedict XV's pontificate, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees was established. With Pope Pius XII, who lived the Second World War and its aftermath (mass deportations, exiles and expulsions), the question of migration was raised from the perspective of universal and permanent rights, based on the principle of solidarity, and the "natural freedom to emigrate" recognised. In the Apostolic Exhortation "*Exsul Familia*" (The Family in Exile), he proposed the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt as an icon of the massive forced migrations we live today:

> "The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and

relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil" (Introduction).

In the Encyclicals *Pacem in Terris* and *Mater et Magistra,* John XXIII reaffirmed Pius XII's principles and shed light on the increasing globalisation phenomenon that took place in the 1960s (PT 106). The Second Vatican Council continued along the same lines and proposed a generous legislation for newcomers. Gaudium et Spes includes many references to migratory problems (GS 66). Paul VI continued the line set by the Vatican II Council and instituted the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral of Migrations.

Pope John Paul II includes in his writings a large number of references about the problem of migration, widely developing the Church's Social Doctrine on this subject. John Paul II's latest social documents are ecclesial in character and contain a rich doctrine, as well as numerous useful practical guidelines for the Pastoral on Human Mobility, especially *Laborem Exercens, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, Centesimus Annus,* as well as *Familiaris Consortio, Christi fideles Laici* and *Redemptoris Missi*, (LE, 23; SRS, 38; CA, 48; CL, 35-44; FC, 46; RM, 58). One of John Paul II's main highlights is the core value of the human person. In the same way, he changes the Pontifical Council created by Paul VI into the Pontifical Council for the Spiritual Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

Benedict XVI, whose pontificate lived the arising of a global financial crisis, sets out in *Caritas in Veritate* an integral and more ethical view, which refocuses international relations paying special attention to migratory flows. In this encyclical**,** a true world political authority and an integral human development are proposed. In 2006, Benedict XVI talks about migration as a "sign of the times" (JME 2006).

Faced with the global increase of forced migratory flows, Pope Francis, who comes from a migrant family, insists on lending support and paying special attention to migrants and refugees in many encyclicals and ministerial documents (EG, AL, LS).[21] He has become one of the world's great leaders who have focused on the reality of suffering and pain as well as on the richness and hope that migrants provide.[22] In January 2017, he created a new Dicastery for Promoting Human Integral Development, where the various Pontifical Councils for Justice and Peace, *Cor Unum*, the Care of Migrant and Itinerant People and Health Care Workers will come together. Due to the importance of this reality, the Pope himself will temporarily attend the section of the Dicastery concerning the attention to refugees and migrants.

5. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

In the current context and considering the pilgrimage of the People of God, which crossroads and borders do we have to transit as Christians? From our point of view, there are at least five which show us a committed view on reality: identity, dignity, justice, hospitality and integrality.[23]

5.1. Identity: who is my family?

One of the most important debates in our society about migrations concerns the question of identity,[24] posed through different tensions: national security vs. human insecurity, national or European citizenship vs. universal citizenship, etc.

Some Catholic theologians[25] have suggested the hypothesis that in Western countries most of the Christians feel comfortable with the idea of a nation state, where the feeling that the countries we live in belong to us is widely accepted and, as powerful hosts, we are called to act benevolently and charitably with foreigners. Many of these discourses presuppose a concept of "nation" as a synonym of "family" and "home," expressed in terms of "the land of our parents or ancestors," "taking care of our heritage," "ensuring our homes."[26] At the other end we find those believers who live their citizenship as an expression of their belonging to the Christian family, as members of Christ's body.

Analysing Matthew's Gospel is interesting in order to shine a light on these approaches: Matthew starts his gospel with Jesus' genealogy (Mt 1,17) and reveals his familial *bona fides*. He shows the Holy Family before (Mt 1,18-25), during (Mt 2,10-15) and

after Jesus' birth (Mt 2,19-23). The devil was the first to call him "Son of God" (Mt 4,3) and Jesus himself refers to God as "Abba" (father) when showing his disciples to pray. Although this language is abundant in the Gospel, it is nonetheless true that the beginning of his public life involves a certain break where following Jesus is more important than blood ties (Mt 8,21-22).

In the tenth chapter, Jesus introduces his apostles to their mission, clearly posing the following of God's will over any other task or mediation, even the family (Mt 10, 21). From this perspective, there are two clarifying passages, for instance (Mt 10, 34-39): "Do not think that I have come to bring peace upon the earth. I have come to bring not peace but the sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's enemies will be those of his household. "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

And also (Mt 12, 46-50): "While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers appeared outside, wishing to speak with him. (Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you.") But he said in reply to the one who told him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother."

From this global point of view, it seems evident that in Jesus' life the follow-up and the discipleship prevail over blood ties or the attachment to his homeland. Accordingly, what gives identity to every Christian is, above all, following Jesus and his life of pilgrimage in this world, rather than blood ties or belonging to this or that nation. "Our identity lays not in a nation's creed but in who we are as a pilgrim people and our outbound movement in the mission of foreigners in need."[27]

And it is in this outbound movement where dialogue turns into a key element for addressing the issue of identity. A dialogue that becomes essential for a profound interreligious dialogue: "sincere dialogue between men and women of different religions may yield fruits of peace and justice."[28]

5.2. Dignity: how has God created us?

One of the first questions that arise when someone approaches human mobility is about its terminology: migrant, refugee, forced migrant, de facto refugees, economic migrant, undocumented immigrant or internally displaced person amongst others. Classifying a wandering person in one of these categories implies assuming clearly legal, politic, cultural, social or economic connotations. Labelling people this way, in many cases, produces inequality, asymmetric relations, exclusion, exploitation, stigmatisation, and privileges. In some way, it generates a form

of exclusion that some have branded as new ways of "colonisation."[29]

Part of the theological task on migration is to deepen in these terms, giving them a more profound meaning within our Jewish-Christian tradition. The book of Genesis introduces a definition of the human being, based on the comprehension of humanity: God created man in his image (Gn 1,26-27; 5,1-3; 9,6; 1Cor 11,7). No label or term used to classify migrants can be compared to the dignity of being an image of God.

I remember a parish in Boston where one of the questions we shared with the Salvadorian community when celebrating baptisms was, precisely, this issue. Within a community in which a significant number of members had obtained citizenship; others a permanent residence card; others a temporary residence and many others were undocumented, receiving the sacrament of Baptism was considered as the recognition of the dignity of being a prophet, priest and king, like Jesus, and a calling to be sons and daughters of God, in His image, being part of a Church without borders. In baptism,[30] the whole community, each one of its members, regardless of the legal label received, felt joint heirs with the same dignity.

In some of the arguments underlying these terms applied to migrants there is a clear economic or mercantile approach. Many of those who emigrate, apart from fleeing conflict zones, do so looking for a better future for themselves and their families, as well as decent employment for themselves and education for their children, etc. Frequently, the label given depends on the possibility of being able to obtain a work permit or the capacity to get real employment. Societies that consider migrants as labour, to the point of adjusting their migratory policies according to the requirements of their labour markets, have been strongly criticised. When labour force is needed, migrants are useful, but when they are not needed, they are "disposable." In the words of the Swiss writer Max Frisch (1965): "we called for labour, and what came was people." The Social Doctrine of the Church proposes an economy at the service of man instead of man at the service of economy. For this reason, the moral quality of the economy does not depend on GNP but rather on how it can help to improve the living conditions of the community.[31]

In addition, *Gaudium et Spes* n. 24 delves into the question of the equal dignity of those who form a community: "God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself."[32] These ties that bind us to the human family recognise a new paradigm whereby *the other* is not seen as a subject who has to overcome many obstacles in order to achieve rights, but as a brother.

This notion of human dignity is rooted in Christian theology, but has universal implications in other religious or philosophical traditions and even in many affinities with the human rights expressed in the Universal Dec-

laration (1948) and in the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951). *Pacem in Terris* n.145 asserts that all human rights derive from the inherent dignity of the human person and are therefore universal, inviolable and inalienable.

Ultimately, being created in the image and likeness of God confers a special dignity and fraternity to every human being that lies on their heart and that nothing and no one can banish. This is why Christians cannot consent nor reinforce racist or xenophobic expressions,[33] oppression or discrimination against any person and especially against the poorest and the most vulnerable, as we are all part of the same universal community.

5.3. Justice: when did we see you a stranger and welcome you?

In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Saint Ignatius of Loyola proposes the contemplation of the Incarnation: "Here, it is how the Three Divine Persons looked at all the plain or circuit of all the world... it is determined in Their Eternity, that the Second Person shall become man to save the human race, and so, the fullness of times being come" EE [102] The Three Divine Persons, they look on all the surface and circuit of the earth "in such variety...some white and others black; some in peace and others in war; some weeping and others laughing; some well, others ill; some being born and others dying, etc... in such blindness"[34] EE [106] and decide to send Jesus. It is in the Incarnation where God decides to start the journey and become a migrant.

In Matthew's Gospel we can appreciate how the God of Jesus not only took on a human nature and emigrated to this world, but He Himself became a refugee when His family suffered political persecution and had to flee to Egypt (Mt 2,13-15). God does not rely on any human privilege nor does He save Himself from any difficulties. God Himself was born in a manger, outdoors, without a home, far from the land of His family. Do we know if the Holy Family had the proper documents to travel and cross Egypt's border? We do not know for sure. This passage shows at least two important idolatries considered from a migratory perspective: the law and sedentariness.

If we approach the legal field from a theological point of view, we can observe how different laws concern the reality of migrations. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, we can distinguish four types of law: natural law, civil law, divine law and eternal law.[35] While politics focus on civil law, the Church also considers the others.[36] Thus, if a civil law excludes the poor without regard to the natural law –for instance, laws that penalise those who give shelter to the needy or laws that facilitate exploitation and extortion-, we could state that it is unfair. A civil law that allows thousands of people to die at sea with no chance of survival is breaking the divine law that impedes murder and is, therefore, unfair. In some cases, injustice can be legalised when social structures favour privileged classes and exclude the most vulnerable. Hence, should a Christian obey an unjust law?

The issue of migratory policies and border controls is also raised in the

theological framework and more precisely in the attempt to find answers in the Sacred Scriptures. On this subject, it is interesting to note the debate between Carroll[37] and Hoffmeier[38], two PhDs and university professors of the Old Testament in American universities. On one hand, Hoffmeier points several parallels between the Bible and the current migration policy models that many countries are implementing (more specifically the U.S.A). On the other, it becomes clear to Carroll that the Christian vision described in the Bible favours a relativisation of the borders and fosters the aid to the persecuted and needy. It is interesting to follow this debate and develop our own synthesis. In my case, I follow Carroll's thesis which defends that borders have a role but must be considered as a means and not an end. Borders cannot prevail over the human being. The aid to the needy and basic individual rights must be granted at the borders. Another idolatry that can be perceived is, as previously stated, sedentariness. Although it is commonly accepted that humans tend to settle and seek certainties, we must be careful and avoid presupposing sedentariness as the rule. Settling as opposed to wandering can easily become an idol, granting privileges to those who settle and marginalising those on the move, especially migrants. According to Matovina and Tweed (2012), the term "roots" has been historically associated to "civilisation" and "acceptance," whereas "mobility" has been linked to "brutality" and "criminality"; but migrants invite us to remember the essence of the Christian identity as pilgrims of this world. In some way, they remind us that wandering and not only settling is a core element for a Christian.

Drawing from the common basis of human dignity, in a context where a wandering and undocumented person is prejudicially related to a criminal, we must not refer to illegal people but to undocumented people. Perhaps, we could refer to them as people who commit an administrative offence when they enter a foreign country without the proper documents, but not as criminals. They should not receive the same legal treatment as those who are serving a sentence.

A few weeks ago, I conversed with a Syrian refugee family which had been wandering for four years through the north of Africa, fleeing from war, death and destruction. After several years in Algeria and Morocco, they entered Spain via the Asylum and Refuge Office in Melilla. It was a family struck by war, adversities and criminal mafias. When they arrived in Spain, they were driven to the Centre for the Temporary Residence of Immigrants (CETI). This is a supersaturated centre that lacks the adequate facilities to accommodate whole families or children. The mother told me: "besides the hardship during our journey, we are now retained. Why? We are not criminals. Why do we have to suffer this way?."

If we follow the previous reasoning, undocumented migrants infringe a civil law but honour the Divine Law to take care of each other in case of extreme necessity or generalised violence.

It is in this context of injustice, conflict and blindness where God is incarnated. The mercy of God starts the way to redemption and justice. It moves to

action. A God who completely gives himself, empties himself of everything except love and becomes one of many, especially a migrant, assuming a condition of vulnerability and accompaniment in a deep act of divine solidarity. Mathew 25 presents Jesus in the following way: "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" (Mt 25,38-40). Jesus becomes a migrant. If God becomes a migrant, it means that when we come into contact with migrants and refugees, we can get a closer knowledge of God.[39] "In each of these 'little ones' Christ himself is present."[40]

5.4. Hospitality: who does Jesus share his table with?

Jesus discovers along his life that the only law that makes sense is the law of love (Jn 13,34). The Love that allows us to overcome our fears, our human uncertainties, and is given to all. A Love we receive from God who, at the same time, invites us to share it with others. "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10,8). Jesus carries out his mission as a migrant, wandering in a foreign land, misunderstood, always on the way, without home or support. Along the way he updates the Kingdom and makes it present. It is during his journey when he has the opportunity to meet the helpless, the widow, the leper, the sinful woman, the tax collector, the fisherman, the scribes and those excluded from society. The primitive Church received this invitation at its origins, revitalised it and began the journey with the aim of becoming a pilgrim, a migrant, and spreading the Good News, the Law of Love, to every corner in the world.

An essential element of Jesus' mission and, hence, of the Church, is hospitality.[41] A hospitality which is lived in a special way through the ministry of reconciliation, the construction of bridges in a torn world and crossing the legal-illegal, pure-impure or inclusion-exclusion boundaries. It is only from God's merciful look that the law and purity acquire their full meaning and take their place as a means and not as an end (Mc 2,23-3,6; Lk 6,1-22; Mt 12,1-14). "For Jesus, God's mercy could not be contained within the walls of limited mindsets (Mt 7,1-5; Mt 13,10-17), and he challenged people to realize a higher law based on God's uncalculating mercy rather than on their restricted notions of worthiness and unworthiness" (Lk 6,27-38).[42] The ministry of reconciliation[43] draws from God's merciful and loving glance. Following Saint Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises: the Divine Persons looked on the earth and said "Let Us work the redemption of the Human race" EE [107].

Every day, millions of people suffer the Calvary of dealing with the limits of pure-impure, exclusion and inclusion. I remember years ago, walking through the streets of a small town in India with children from a local orphanage for Dalits (untouchables). We strolled through narrow streets, joking and playing, until we got to an arch. There, several men exaggeratedly ges-

ticulated to prevent us from passing. I soon realised that the town was divided by castes, just like the classes in a school. No one could touch those children; they were sons of the untouchable. In fact, I was impressed by the testimony of a teacher who had chosen to lose her "purity" teaching those children, now no man would ever marry her.[44]

A wandering family is a privileged space for hospitality. In *Amoris Laetitia* (46) Pope Francis says: "Migration is another sign of the times to be faced and understood in terms of its negative effects on family life. Human mobility, which corresponds to the natural historical movement of peoples, can prove to be a genuine enrichment for both families that migrate and countries that welcome them" (AL 46). We need to take a special glance at those families who live dramatic and devastating migratory experiences, especially when they take place outside of legal procedures and are organised by human trafficking organisations. Also when they concern women or unaccompanied minors.

Jesus' hospitality, like nowadays', is based on "solid pillars at home and sharing table; creating gathering spaces for healing, sharing, reconciliating, discerning, celebrating and becoming witnesses of hope."[45]

By looking at Jesus' life we can see that his meals and celebrations are a central element of his experience as a migrant or a pilgrim. With whom did he sit? Who were his privileged guests? In many occasions Jesus shares his table with sinners, reconfiguring the boundaries of purity, with those who are marginalised for economic (Lk 7,11-17), health (Lk 7,22; Mc 10,46; Jn 9,8), racial (Lk 7,1-10), religious (Lk 7,24-35) or moral (Lk 7,36-50) reasons. His call to the table was good news for the poor and excluded, although in many cases it meant rejection or was considered a scandal.[46] For many theologians, it was His way of moving between the categories of inclusion and exclusion and, above all, His way of sharing the table, what took Jesus to the trial and crucifixion: "Jesus was crucified for His table-fellowship."[47]

In the words of J. Jeremias: "Every table fellowship is for an oriental a guarantee of peace, confidence, fraternity; table fellowship means a community of life. For an oriental, it is clear that Jesus offers forgiveness and salvation by admitting sinners and rejects. This is the reason for which Pharisees react violently."[48]

It is at the table where everything makes sense, where the disciples of Emmaus recognised Jesus "in the breaking of bread";[49] it is in the Eucharist, in the breaking of the shared bread and the poured blood, where we remember Jesus. Jesus is hospitable to the extreme. In this sense, hospitality becomes mercy, opens the doors and receives the defenceless and excluded (Lk 10,25-37).

Jesus was hospitable and shared his table with anyone he found along the way, celebrating, anticipating the table fellowship of the Kingdom of God (Lk 15,11-32). A celebration that, compared with the acceptance of refugees and migrants in Europe, some authors have described as "intercultural encounters that may become a modern experience of the Holy Spirit,"[50] like Pentecost (Acts 2,1-13).

5.5. Integrality: is everything connected?

We live in a world where globalisation and interdependence directly or indirectly affect every person, community or nation in the world. Our communication networks, including the aerial, maritime or terrestrial, not to mention the electronic, are increasing exponentially. In this interconnected, complex and global world, what happens in any part of the world affects millions of people in one way or another. For instance, a drop in the price of cocoa on the London Stock Exchange affects millions of farmers all around the world. In the same way, when we read the labels on our clothes, we discover a production and assembly chain that travels around half the world: the first stages, intense in human labour, often take advantage of developing countries, while the last ones are generally developed in northern countries along with the sales benefits.[51]

Saint Paul clearly expresses the idea of this interconnection with the metaphor of the human body referred to the Church and our connection to Jesus. We are all one body in Christ (1Cor 12,12). For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function (Rm 12, 4). This is why whatever affects one of the members, affects all.

In our tradition, this same image of interconnection, especially with the earth and the environment, is lived intensely in the accounts of Creation (Gn 1-3) where God is the Fountain and gets involved in the whole of creation, especially through his Son, until new things have come (2Cor 5,17).

Jesus was raised in a rural setting and this is the reason for which his life and predications include symbolic references to natural elements, harvests, etc. This interconnection with God's creation is expressed by Jesus through metaphors related to creation: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower... Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine... I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit... By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples" (Jn 15,1-8).

This interconnection we live, also mentioned by Jesus, poses us increasing challenges that imply a stronger commitment as well as a need for strong and transforming responses. Environmental migration is one of these great challenges. Currently, the number of people forced to leave their homes due to natural disasters, global warming, high concentration of greenhouse gases, increase of sea level or other extreme events is, in general, higher than those who flee because of war conflicts, political or socioeconomic reasons. It is believed that almost 25 million people per year are forced to leave their homes for environmental reasons. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) calculates that between 250 and 1000 million people will lose their homes and properties and will be forced to leave their lands and even their country in the following 50 years.

As we previously stated, our world poses complex challenges that require complex answers, which ought to be

strong and transforming, and should aim to look at the world as a whole. We cannot offer partial solutions to complex and global problems. Pope Francis has consecrated the concept of "integral ecology," which addresses a bond between environmental and social issues, a bond that is inevitable for environmental migration.

For Pope Francis, "the analysis of environmental problems cannot be separated from the analysis of human, family, work-related and urban contexts, nor from how individuals relate to themselves" (LS 141), because "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental" (LS 139). In this context, "there has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever" (LS 25).

In this process, the Earth is considered as a common good (LS 156), which we share with others and are responsible to grant for future generations (intergenerational solidarity); besides, it is closely linked with the preferential option for the poor (LS 158), who are the major victims of environmental migrations (LS 48) and in many cases cannot realize for themselves the virtues of this interconnected world because of the financial and digital breach.

Everything is connected. This is why this environmental crisis is, ultimately, a spiritual crisis that is rooted in a disconnection of the human being with himself, with the earth, with his fellows and with God. This is the reason for which we need an "ecological conversion"; this is, to opt for a new form of life (LS 203-208) and to encourage an ecological education (LS 213).

The theological term "reconciliation" expresses this integral glance and God's own way of being, "And all this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ" (2Cor 5,18-19). This ecological conversion, this integral view, is a mission that aims to re-establish just relations with ourselves, with others, with creation and with God (GC 35 and 36).

In summary, we face an urgent challenge to take care and protect our common home, which includes raising the awareness about belonging to the same family and our need of an ecological conversion. Our migratory perspective overgrows any biased prospect and this challenges us "to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change" (LS 13). But this solution requires "an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature" (LS 139).

6. IN SUMMARY

The reality of migration as a "sign of our times"[52] needs to be approached intensely and profoundly by theological reflection.

The actual situation of migration at a global level, along with the call to take a closer look at this reality, puts us at a crossroads about identity, dignity, justice, hospitality and integrality.

In the first place, the identity of every Christian is primarily rooted in the following of Jesus, in his life as a pilgrim, a wanderer, and not in blood ties or belonging to a race or a nation. This identity is built with dialogue.

The second crossroads is dignity: human beings were created in the image and likeness of God. This filiation opens us to fraternity and recognises that all people have the same dignity and nothing or no one can banish it. Therefore, as Christians, we feel members of the same universal community where racism, xenophobia and oppression have no place.

Thirdly, God gives Himself, empties Himself of everything except love and becomes one of many, assuming a condition of vulnerability and accompaniment in a deep act of divine solidarity. In this sense, God's mercy is practised along with justice. Jesus becomes a migrant: "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" (Mt 25,38-40). Therefore, if God becomes a migrant, it means that when we come into contact with migrants and refugees we can get a closer knowledge of God.

In the fourth place, hospitality is an essential element of Jesus' mission and

is lived in a special way through the ministry of reconciliation and celebration. In our torn world, Christians are called to construct crossing the legal-illegal, pure-impure or inclusion-exclusion boundaries. Besides, hospitality has a great pillar in the celebration, the table fellowship, the banquet. Jesus invites everyone to his table, including those who are rejected or demonised by society. It is in this hospitality, in this table fellowship, where Jesus anticipates the Kingdom of God. It is this way of hospitality what takes him to the Cross.

The last, but not least, crossroads is integrality. God has created us as one single family with the conviction that everything is connected. In some way, globalisation shows us what this might mean, but it oughts to put people, creation and God at its centre, rather than economic and politic interests. Environmental migrations seriously question our world, which cannot face this challenge in a partial or biased way. We need to move towards a sustainable and integral development, capable of restoring human an environmental dignity.

Who is my family? How has God created us? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you? With whom does Jesus share his table? Is everything connected? These five questions continue encouraging, defying and questioning the way we approach the reality of migration in our way to a theology of migrations.

Perhaps, apart from media campaigns or advocacy actions in favour of the most vulnerable migrants, our Church and we need to take a look at these questions from a perspective of identity, dignity, justice, hospitality and integrality. This glance should permeate the life of the Church, our hearts and the hearts of our communities and, above all, it should stir us and impel us to action.

7. POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF MIGRATIONS

We conclude with the prayer in memory of the victims of migrations that Pope Francis conducted in Lesbos, in April 2016, along with His Blessedness Leronymos, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, and His Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

Merciful God,
we pray to You for all the men, women and children
who have died after leaving their homelands
in search of a better life.
Though many of their graves bear no name,
to You each one is known, loved and cherished.
May we never forget them,
but honour their sacrifice with deeds more than words.

We entrust to You all those who have made this journey,
enduring fear, uncertainty and humiliation,
in order to reach a place of safety and hope.
Just as You never abandoned Your Son
as He was brought to a safe place by Mary and Joseph,
so now be close to these, Your sons and daughters,
through our tenderness and protection.

In caring for them may
we seek a world where none are forced to leave their home
and where all can live in freedom, dignity and peace.

Merciful God and Father of all,
wake us from the slumber of indifference,
open our eyes to their suffering,
and free us from the insensitivity born of worldly comfort
and self-centredness.
Inspire us, as nations, communities and individuals,
to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.
May we share with them the blessings
we have received from Your hand, and recognise that together,
as one human family,
we are all migrants, journeying in hope to You, our true home,
where every tear will be wiped away,
where we will be at peace and safe in Your embrace.

NOTES

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3. Bevans, Stephen B. (2004). *Modelos de Teología Contextual*. Quito: Verbo Divino, p. 3.
4. Bevans (2004). *Op. Cit.*, p. 24.
5. Bevans (2004). *Op. Cit.*, p. 29-30.
6. Bevans (2004). *Op. Cit.*, p. 31.
7. Fisichella, Rino (1993). *Introducción a la teología fundamental*. Estella: Verbo Divino.
8. Additional information and testimonies can be found in the following websites: OIM, www.iom.int/; ACNUR, www.acnur.org/; del SJR Internacional, www.jrs.net and SJM España, www.sjme.org/ (Last access, March 2017).
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16. *Orígenes.* Comentario a la Epístola a los Romanos, XII, 13.
17. Crisóstomo, Juan. *Homilías sobre San Mateo*, homilía L, 4 y 5.
18. De Milán, Ambrosio, *Sobre los deberes de los ministros*, III, VII, 45.
19. San Agustín, *Sermones*, sermón 239,4.
20. San Agustín, *Enarraciones sobre los salmos*, salmo 83,8.
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22. Ares, Alberto (2014). «El Papa Francisco: una mirada a las migraciones». *Revista Corintios XIII (151-152)*, Madrid.
23. For the development of this section I have drawn on a previous reflection: Ares, Alberto (2016). «Cuándo te vimos forastero y te acogimos: Transitando una teología de las migraciones». *Revista Corintios XIII* (157), Madrid, p. 69-83.
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30. A very interesting reflection from the theological perspective can be found in: Budde, Michael (2011). *The Borders of Baptism: Identities, Allegiances and the Church. Theopolitical Visions*, Eugene, CO., Cascade Books. This author suggests that a Christian acquires its main identity by means of the baptism and the belonging to the Church's transnational community, with all that this implies from the perspective of Solidarity Ecclesiology for the field of migration, amongst others. About the Church as a transnational space: Ares, Alberto (2011). «Iglesia como espacio trasnacional. La religiosidad popular que viaja de Ecuador a España: la devoción a la Virgen del Quiche». *Revista Migraciones* núm. 29. Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, p. 175-192.
31. Pope Francis (2013). *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 93.
32. Second Vatican Council (1965). *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 24.
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148. J. LAGUNA. Evangelical Dystopias; 149. J. F. MÁRIA, E. DEVUYST. King Leopold's Mines; 150. V. CODINA. Fifty Years ago There Was a Council…; 151. A. BLANCH. Leo Tolstoy, Political Prophet and Evangelical Anarchist; 152. J. I. GONZÁLEZ FAUS. A New Church for a New World; 153. A. CALDERÓN, L. SOLS. Europe at the Crossroads; 154. S. HERRERA. Trapped in Limbo, Women, Migration and Sexual Violence; 155. J. CARRERA. The Revolution of Every Day. Christianity, Capitalism, and Post-modernity; 156. O. MATEOS. From «Tragedy» to «Miracle»? Africa in the New Multipolar Context; 157. J. I. GONZÁLEZ FAUS. God?; 158. X. ALEGRE SANTAMARIA, J. I. GONZÁLEZ FAUS, J. MARTÍNEZ GORDO, A. TORRES QUEIRUGA. Rebuilding Lives, Divorce, Welcome, and Communion; 159. J. FLAQUER. Islam: The Crescent Moon… Waxing; 160. M. GONZÁLEZ MARTÍN. From Hostility to Hospitality; 161. SEVERAL AUTHORS. New Frontiers, the Same Commitment; 162. J. LAGUNA. Steepping on the Moon; 163. C. M. TEMPORELLI. Friends of God, Prophets of the People; 164. J. I. GONZÁLEZ FAUS. Inhuman and Subhuman; 165. J. CARRERA, L. PUIG. Toward an Integral Ecology; 166. J. SANZ. How to Think About Change Today; 167. J. BOTEY. The Protestant Reformation at 500 Years; 168. A. ARES. Sons and Daughters of a Pilgrim

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