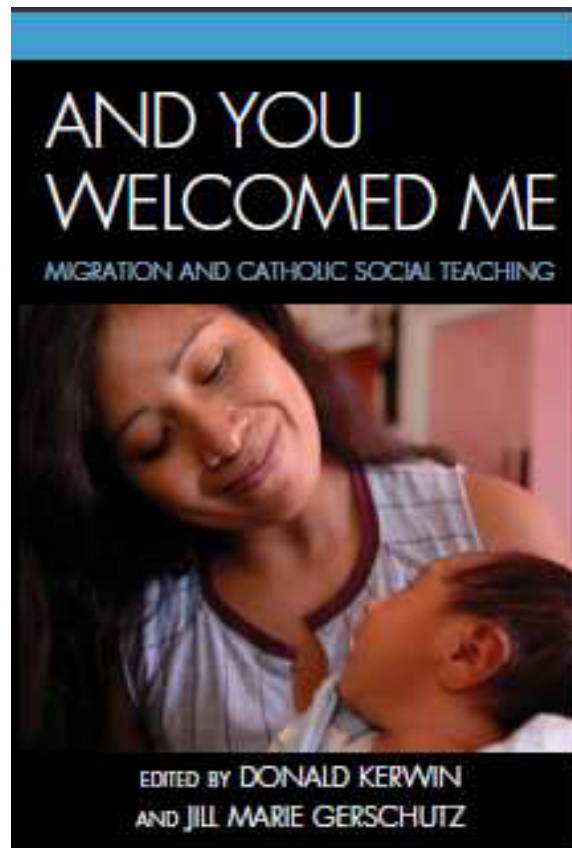


**Woodstock Theological Center
Theology of Migration Project**



***Reflection Questions and
Suggested Additional Exercises***



Cover photo: Mother and her newborn at the Kino Border Initiative's Women's Shelter in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. Photo by Christian Fuchs, Jesuit Refugee Services/USA. www.jrusa.org.

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Introduction

Gasper F. Lo Biondo and Richard Ryscavage

- Rev. Lo Biondo and Rev. Ryscavage contend that the Church has a unique and broader perspective on migration and refugees than many others who comment on this phenomenon. How do the assumptions and even the language used by the Church in discussing migration differ from that used by economists, politicians and others?
- What assumptions do you bring to a conversation about immigration? How does your faith inform those assumptions?
- What role do you think is appropriate for the Church – both clergy and the laity – to play in the current immigration debate? Why?
- Additional exercises:
 - Read the 2003 Pastoral Letter by the US and Mexican Bishops: [Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](http://www.usccb.org/mrs/stranger.shtml). The letter is available online at <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/stranger.shtml>.
 - Reflect upon and imagine the Judgment Day passage in the Bible (Matthew 25:31-45), found on Page 2. Imagine being Christ as a stranger; or one of those assembled. Consider acting the passage out as a group and discussing how you feel playing the roles.

Matthew Chapter 25



- 31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne,
- 32 and all the nations be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
- 33 He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
- 34 Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.
- 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me,
- 36 naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'
- 37 Then the righteous answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?
- 38 When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?
- 39 When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'
- 40 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.'
- 41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

- 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink.
- 43 a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'
- 44 Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'
- 45 He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

“To limit compassion to the borders of one’s nationality, one’s family, or even one’s self is a migration toward disintegration.” *And You Welcomed Me*, p. 20.

Chapter 1
Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a
Theology of Migration and Refugees

Daniel G. Groody

- Take some time to reflect upon the barriers in our lives: barriers between ourselves and our newcomer neighbors; barriers between our lives and our God; barriers between the way we (as U.S. residents) view immigrants and the way we (as Catholics) view immigrants. What lies behind many of these barriers?
- What are the basic theological premises for the Church's teaching on migration, as expressed by Rev. Groody?
- How does migration serve as a metaphor for faith? Does this resonate with your faith experience? Why or why not?
- Additional exercise: Watch Rev. Groody's film [*Dying to Live*](#) and use the discussion guide to explore it further. (Dying to Live is available at <http://www.dyingtolive.nd.edu/>.)

Chapter 2
International Migration: Social, Economic, and
Humanitarian Considerations

Mary DeLorey

- What are two explanations as to why people migrate? Do you know any immigrants and the reasons they migrated? Consider sharing one or two of their stories.
- What risks and sacrifices do migrants make in order to migrate? Have you ever made a similar life-altering sacrifice? If so, how did it impact your family? Faith? Fortune?
- Consider the primary and secondary interests of stakeholders in migration: the migrant himself/herself; the migrant's family; sending and receiving communities, and sending and receiving governments, businesses who hire them, etc. Construct a chart illustrating the primary and secondary interests of the stakeholders. What interests do all stakeholders share? How do their priorities differ? Given your analysis of these interests, what do they suggest to you about the principle of subsidiarity? (The principle of subsidiarity asserts that the unit of society closest to a decision should make the decision; as a decision impacts more people, then larger bodies – such as community, or state government, etc., may need to become involved.)
- Additional exercise: Listen to the webcast of the [CATO Institute: Immigrants: Your Country Needs Them](#) about the book by that title by Philippe Legrain. The webcast addresses many of the economic concerns regarding immigration. (It is available at <http://www.cato.org/event.php?eventid=3894>.)

Chapter 3
But the Laborers are....Many? Catholic
Social Teaching on Business, Labor, and Economic Migration
John J. Hoeffner and Michele R. Pistone

- What is meant by the concept of “authentic development”? How is it distinct from purely economic development?
- How does the concept of “authentic development” impact your perception of poverty, at home and abroad? Your thoughts about your government’s policy priorities?
- How do immigrants contribute to their home communities? Do they contribute to the common good and, if so, in what ways?
- Additional exercise: Watch the film *Fast Food Nation*. Discuss the role immigrants play in the United States’ food industry. Discuss also the risks migrants take on their journeys and while working in the United States.

Chapter 4
Rights, the Common Good, and
Sovereignty in Service to the Human Person
Donald Kerwin

- Some have defined citizenship as “the right to have rights.” Yet the US Constitution and Catholic social thought assert that rights are inherent in all people regardless of their legal status. Discuss this contradiction and its implications for migrants and US immigration policy.
- The Church acknowledges that undocumented immigrants have broken the law, but teaches that people must provide for their families and seek to keep them together. How does this teaching apply to a person like Don Chuy?
- Kerwin notes that security experts in the United States after September 11, 2001, called for a “draining of the swamp” (i.e. legalizing unauthorized migrants) in order to allow law enforcement to focus its attention on individuals who present a danger (e.g. drug smugglers, human traffickers, terrorists). Does this change your perspective on immigration and security? Discuss.
- Watch the film *The Visitor* and use the discussion guide by Education for Justice: <http://www.educationforjustice.org/system/files/TheVisitor08.pdf>

Chapter 5
**Integration Yesterday and Today: New
Challenges for the United States and the Church**
Jill Marie Gerschutz with Lois Ann Lorentzen

- Discuss the migration of your ancestors to the United States. (You may have to do a little research.) Were they among the marginalized Irish or Italian-Catholics? Did they arrive before or after visa quotas were set in 1924? How did your ancestors and subsequent generations mainstream into American culture?
- Gerschutz and Lorentzen posit that churches have a vital role to play in integrating migrants – from a socio-cultural, pastoral, and theological perspective. Does your church have experience with programs to integrate newcomers?
 - If so, how has this changed your community? What tensions have you had to confront? What gifts have newcomers and diverse ethnicities brought to your community?
 - If not, is there an opportunity to enhance interaction between newcomers and your community?
- Additional exercise: Attend mass in a language you don't understand. What new stands out to you about the mass? In what ways do you feel like an outsider? An insider?

Chapter 6
Christian Hospitality and
Solidarity with the Stranger
William O'Neill

- What do you understand hospitality to mean? How does it differ with the concept of solidarity?
- Rev. O'Neill posits that hospitality to and solidarity with the stranger among us is central to our faith – indeed, what it means to be Christian. Discuss.
- Additional exercise: Reflect upon and imagine the biblical passage of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), found on Page 12. Imagine being the Samaritan in the story; or the lawyer; or the priest. Consider acting the passage out as a group and discussing how you feel playing the roles.

Luke

Chapter 10



- 25 There was a scholar of the law stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
- 26 Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"
- 27 He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."
- 28 He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."
- 29 But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
- 30 Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.
- 31 A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
- 32 Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
- 33 But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.
- 34 He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.
- 35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'
- 36 Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

37 He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

"Following Christ in a way shaped by the gift of self to others becomes a way of speaking about participation in the self-giving love of God." *And You Welcomed Me*, p. 9.



The Woodstock Theological Center is a non-profit independent research institute, established in 1974 by the Maryland and New York Provinces of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). The mission of the Woodstock Theological Center is to engage in theological and ethical reflection on topics of social, economic and political importance. Located on the campus of Georgetown University in Washington, DC, the Center does research, conducts conferences and seminars, and publishes books and articles. Its work is a particular instance of the contemporary mission of the Society of Jesus: the service of faith through the promotion of justice.

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