

SEEING WITH NEW EYES

by Julia Occhiogrosso

I am often so occupied with the details of the food serving operation that I am unable to be as present to our guests as ideally, I would prefer. Thankfully, many of our volunteers make up for this. Not so distracted, they can be more intentional in listening and offering tender attention to the people who frequent our food line. This is a rare gift to many of our guests who often feel despised or invisible. Showing regard for each person by learning their name or by empathic listening are ways to cultivate our capacity to see the sacred in each person – a seeing the way God sees, a seeing through the eye of the heart.

It is in this way that I learned about the circumstance of a food line guest. One volunteer asked another volunteer to help her with Spanish translation so she could better understand what he was requesting.

Andres suffers from diabetes and needs dialysis treatment three times a week. He lost his left foot to his illness and uses a wheelchair. He was struggling to see and was requesting our help with getting a prescription for eyeglasses. His limited Medicaid does not cover an ophthalmologist visit. We managed to arrange an appointment with an ophthalmologist, where we learned that Andres had severe cataracts in both eyes. The ophthalmologist needed to refer him to a retina specialist to clear him for surgery. The appointment with the retina specialist went well and we received the go ahead to pursue surgery.

But while driving Andres back to the Catholic Charities shelter after the appointment we learned of yet more difficulties Andres encounters regularly. Apparently, if Andres arrives at the shelter past the scheduled intake time (1:30 p.m.) he loses a chance to get a lower bunk. Unable to maneuver into a top bunk, he is unable to secure a bed at the shelter. This was confirmed that afternoon when I went into the shelter while Andres and Gary waited in the car. After explaining the circumstances to the bed manager, I was told that they could not make any accommodations. They had a policy of first come, first served.

I returned to the vehicle to report my efforts. Andres responded, “Just leave me here outside by the Courtyard.” He was accustomed to sleeping outside in his wheelchair, when he could not get into the



PHOTO BY JULIA OCCHIOGROSSO

shelter. Seeing his predicament, we could not bear to leave him. He came home with us to the Catholic Worker.

Andres is just one of the many desperate people, homeless, disabled and living on the streets with complicated medical circumstances. We see them at our food line and in our neighborhood. Insulated from these realities it is easy to assume that somehow, somewhere people with these vulnerabilities will be taken care of by some agency or health care provider. Indeed, our perceptions of the poor are usually from a distance. A scene we see through the car window. A story we hear on the evening news.

Pope Francis and now Pope Leo XIV invite us to foster a culture of encounter. This includes the practice of seeking out and being receptive to listening and under-

standing the stories of people different than us. As Pope Leo XIV stated recently, “we must commit ourselves to encounter and listen to the poor, who are a treasure for the church and for humanity.” Pope Leo’s invitation is an inspired response to the signs of the time. A time when we are experiencing a global trend of creating false narratives that demonize the most vulnerable: the poor, the migrant, the refugee. Often propagated by powerful elites for political and personal gain, these deceptive versions of reality promote fear, and regrettably dictate our actions and decisions. They lead to public policies that are socially destructive, dehumanizing and which inflict immense undue suffering. As I wrote this reflection, I learned that the U.S. Supreme court has just ruled that ICE authorities can
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legally detain and question anyone who even “looks” like they could be an immigrant.

In our wounded humanity, we are susceptible to believing deceptive narratives. Fear has a way of distorting our perceptions of reality. In our desire for security and a sense of control and power we default to grasping at the world’s way of seeing the poor. So consumed by our individual need for safety, we begin to see other vulnerable human beings as a threat. We support policies that show no mercy and negate their humanity.

In contrast, fostering a culture of encounter, seeks to acknowledge the dignity of each person. It is a way for Christians to animate the profoundly relevant Gospel teaching to love one another. But it requires faith and courage. It requires a willingness to take the vulnerable step of surrendering our need to gain a sense of security and safety by employing tactics which cause harm to other human beings. Following the Gospel message of love is the way of the Cross. But it is also the way of redemption and true freedom. A freedom borne out of acts of selfless love.

Andres sits at our kitchen table and enjoys a homecooked meal. I listen as he shares his challenges, regrets, faith and gratitude. It is in the particularity of his sharing that I see with new eyes the beauty and gift of Andres’ personhood. Rather than just catching a glimpse of him amidst the distractions of serving at the food line, I have a few moments to be present and attentive. An invisible power is moving through our encounter. It gives us hope that Andres may regain his sight and that we will learn how to see more compassionately through the eye of the heart.

Pope: Migrants are “witnesses of hope”

by Isabella H. de Carvalho

Pope Leo XIV highlights how migrants and refugees in a special way can become witnesses of hope and tenacity amidst adversity and calls for a future of peace and respect for human dignity, in his Message for the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, released on Friday, July 25.

The Pope explains that migrants and refugees thus have an important role to play in showing hope in a better future. For the Catholic Church, “the virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man and woman;” and this search is “certainly one of the main motivations” for migrants, refugees and displaced persons, making them “messengers” and “privileged witnesses of hope.”

“Indeed, they demonstrate this daily through their resilience and trust in God, as they face adversity while seeking a future in which they glimpse that integral human development and happiness are possible,” he says, comparing the experience of the people of Israel described in the Bible.

“In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost,” he stresses, “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.”

At the same time, Pope Leo explains that communities that welcome migrants and refugees can also be “a living witness to hope” as they show “the promise of a present and a future where the dignity of all as children of God is recognized.”

“In this way, migrants and refugees are

recognized as brothers and sisters, part of a family in which they can express their talents and participate fully in community life,” he says.

Catholic migrants and refugees can revitalize the Church.

On a spiritual level, Pope Leo highlights that migrants and refugees also remind the Church “of her pilgrim dimension, perpetually journeying towards her final homeland, sustained by a hope that is a theological virtue.” He encourages the Church and its members to be “God’s people journeying towards the heavenly homeland” and avoid the “temptation of ‘sedentarization’” and becoming “of the world.”

In this regard, the Pope believes Catholic migrants and refugees have a special mission in becoming “missionaries of hope in the countries that welcome them, forging new paths of faith where the message of Jesus Christ has not yet arrived or initiating interreligious dialogue based on everyday life and the search for common values”.

“This is a true *missio migrantium*, a mission carried out by migrants, for which adequate preparation and ongoing support must be ensured through effective inter-ecclesial cooperation,” he says.

“With their spiritual enthusiasm and vitality, they can help revitalize ecclesial communities that have become rigid and weighed down, where spiritual desertification is advancing at an alarming rate,” he says. “Their presence, then, should be recognized and appreciated as a true divine blessing, an opportunity to open oneself to the grace of God, who gives new energy and hope to His Church.”

(excerpt edited from *VaticanNews.VA*)



Catholic Worker Artwork
Our friend Sarah Fuller is offering a bountiful assortment

of linocut art for sale on T-Shirts, stickers, posters, cards and more.

Online at:
[redbubble.com/people/sarahfullerart/shop](https://www.redbubble.com/people/sarahfullerart/shop)

We will be Closed
Nov. 27-29 and
Dec. 26 - Jan. 3

PLEASE JOIN US

Volunteer Scheduling:
(702) 647-0728

or mail@lvcw.org

Thurs.-Sat., 6:00 a.m.

Morning prayer at the Catholic Worker
Thurs.-Sat., 6:15 a.m. Over 300 "To-go" hot meals served to the poor and homeless (6:15 a.m.: meal assembly, 7:00 - 7:30 a.m.: meal distribution)

Wed.-Fri., 8-10 a.m. Kitchen crew prepares for the next morning's meal
Thursday, 11:30 a.m.

50 lunches taken to the homeless



we are one family under God

View resources and take action
at: JusticeforImmigrants.org

prepared by Our Lady of Wisdom Italo-Greek Byzantine Catholic Church

Friday, 8-10 a.m. Clean the World Foundation shower trailer in our empty lot, up to 40 showers given. We provide clean clothing and hygiene supplies, Touro University students offer a monthly medical clinic.

Second Sat. of the month

Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast for the homeless (Not held in January 2026)

We are a Participating Member of Nevadans for the Common Good
(for info, contact Julia@lvcw.org)

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