

Eltiq InForma

Special Edition

**No one is saved
alone**

Editorial

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

**Immigration welfare:
subsidiarity, ethical support
and humanitarian rights**

**Growing demand for young
and skilled immigrants**

Photo: "Angels Unawares" St. Peter's Square

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“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”



Texts: H.E. Mons. Gian Carlo Perego
Archbishop of Ferrara-Comacchio
Former President of the Migrants Foundation
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The book “I was a stranger” and the conference “no one saves themselves alone” refer to a condition that history has always recorded in its different eras and also in contemporary times. Today, in fact, over 300 million people are on the move, migrants, for various reasons: the search for work and social security, war, climate change, human trafficking. In mobility, we encounter different faces, people whose dignity and life must always be safeguarded. The narrative of migration often, unfortunately, today, instead of starting from reality,

is influenced by ideological or utilitarian schemes, which do not help to understand and govern migration, as would be necessary – as the book highlights – no longer only at a national level, but also European and global, distinguishing the profiles of migrants.

Likewise, the profiles and expectations of migrants demand that we do not simply stop at reception, but – as Pope Francis first and Leo XIV today have indicated –

move to the protection of people within the law – especially unaccompanied minors, women, the disabled – to the promotion of migrants – recognising their qualifications and skills – up to their integration, which is also the theme of the recognition of citizenship, of different religious experiences.

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Immigration flows have always been determined by the labour market and the needs of the most industrially

“To welcome, protect, promote and integrate” are the four verbs that the Church today invites us to conjugate in accompanying migrants,

recognising in them a ‘blessing’, the gift and presence of God in history. This calls for in the reading of migrations – as the Author writes – “the change of the cultural paradigm: from emergency to resource”. In the exhortation *Dilexite*, Pope Leo XIV recognises – as already before in the apostolic constitution *Exul Familia* Pius XII (1952) – that in the history of the Church, migrants have always been ‘accompanied’.

This verb ‘to accompany’ is significant, because it doesn’t just mean to welcome, but to commit to being and staying close, near to migrants, helping them so they can be free and autonomous – through education, work, family – without replacing them. Education and work are two fundamental tools for the autonomy and fulfilment of migrants, but also for the growth of our country and Europe.

Only by valuing these tools, accompanied by housing, family reunification, and health protection, can the country, Europe, grow and build the common good.

Already today in Italy, there are 2.5 million workers, 600,000 entrepreneurs, a similar number of immigrant families, one million between compulsory school students and university students, and one and a half million immigrants have also become Italian citizens: a treasure of humanity, of skills and an important economic resource for the life of our country.

“It is, therefore, about us being the first to see and to help others see in the migrant and refugee – as Pope Francis wrote – not just a problem to be faced, but a brother and sister to

to welcome, respect and love, an opportunity that Providence offers us to contribute to the building of a more just society, a more complete democracy, a more supportive country, a more fraternal world and a more open Christian community, according to the Gospel” (Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2013). I conclude by recalling that “the Church has always recognised in migrants – as Leo XIV writes in the exhortation *Dilexite* – a living presence of the Lord who, on the day of judgment, will say to those on his right: ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ (Mt 25:35)”.

And for this reason – these are still the words of Leo XIV – “The Church, like a mother, walks with those who walk. Where the world sees threats, she sees children; where walls are built, she builds bridges. She knows that her proclamation of the Gospel is credible only when it translates into gestures of closeness and welcome. And she knows that in every rejected migrant, it is Christ himself who knocks at the doors of the community”.

BIAGIO SIMONETTI

ALFONSO BRUNO

ERO FORESTIERO

L'ACCOGLIENZA CHE DIVENTA LAVORO,
IL LAVORO CHE GENERA FUTURO

Professione di **Monsignor Carlo Perego**
Thus, while on the one hand rich countries
(Arcivescovo di Ferrara - Comacchio e Abate di Pomposa)



Growing demand for young and skilled immigrants

young and skilled immigrants



Texts: Antonio GASPARI
Editorial Director

seem concerned about the growth of illegal immigration, businesses in countries like Italy are making increasingly consistent requests for the employment

of young and qualified regular immigrants. According to the Unioncamere – Anpal 2024 report, Italy needed over 500,000 regular foreign workers each year to fill gaps in the labour market in the metallurgy, construction, agriculture, and livestock sectors; in logistics

and transport; in catering and tourism; in home care and healthcare.

Even in the industrial sector, more and more companies need skilled workers, welders, lavoro nei settori della metallurgia, dell'edilizia, dell'agricoltura e dell'allevamento; nella logistica e nei trasporti; nella ristorazione e nel turismo; nell'assistenza domiciliare e nella sanità. Anche nel comparto industriale, sono sempre più le aziende che hanno bisogno di operai specializzati, saldatori, mechanics, maintenance workers that the domestic market can no longer provide. In light of this situation, the 2024 Flows Decree authorised 151,000 regular entries, of which: 57,000 for seasonal subordinate work and 7,000 for highly skilled workers.

This number is insufficient and often difficult to utilise due to bureaucratic complications and slow and cumbersome implementation processes for hiring foreign workers.

For the three-year period 2026-2028, the government has planned for a total of 497,550 foreign workers to enter Italy, including seasonal, non-seasonal, domestic workers and seasonal, non-seasonal, domestic workers and carers.

The objective of the measure "is to allow the entry into Italy of labour essential to the national economic and productive system and otherwise unavailable."

Unfortunately, the Italian political debate seems to be almost exclusively focused on how to solve the problems of irregular immigration, which accounts for less than 15% of the total. accounts for less than 15% of the total.

However, if we look at reality, the problems of emigration and immigration seem to be quite different.

The emigration of young Italian graduates and diploma holders to Europe is a great concern. Europe.

In 2025, Italians residing abroad totalled 6.4 million, while regular immigrants in Italy numbered 5.4 million. This means that we should be more concerned with bringing Italians back from abroad rather than limiting the number of immigrants coming to Italy.

The emigration of young Italian people and families abroad has reached an unimaginable scale in recent years. scale. Between 2011 and 2024, 486,000 young Italians (first or second citizenship) under 34 years old emigrated to European countries such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Switzerland, because they offered them higher salaries higher salaries and better welfare services. and better welfare services.

According to Istat, 294,000 young Italians leave Italy, and more than half are graduates. The other half who leave Italy are diploma holders. Italy are diploma holders. Furthermore, young people who emigrate do not come from poor, low-educated backgrounds, willing to take up low-skilled or unskilled jobs.

On the contrary, these are qualified people who do not find suitable economic conditions, job quality, and social recognition in Italy, social recognition, adequate to their abilities and aspirations, both in the private and public sectors. Both the ISTAT report and the Governor of the Bank of Italy,

Fabio Panetta, agree on the need to "Create the conditions for new generations to realise their aspirations and contribute to the progress of the country is not only an economic responsibility: it is the civic duty of this time. duty of this time. time.

Only in this way can Italy navigate an increasingly fragmented world fragmented world without suffering its divisions, and transform technological transition into a season of freedom, work, and confidence in the future."

Policies aimed at isolating Italy and repatriating foreigners also appear erroneous.

Officially, according to surveys updated in January 2025, resident foreigners in Italy number 5.4 million, representing 9.2% of the total population. From an employment perspective, out of a total of 24 million employed people, foreign workers account for 2.5 million, representing 10.5% of the total.

Over 86% of foreign workers have an employment contract, and in 79% of cases, it is a permanent contract.

Well, the 5.4 million regular foreigners who live and work in Italy contribute significantly to GDP growth and to the payment of pension contributions.

According to INPS, in 2023, 10% of contributions pension contributions were paid by foreign workers.

Many have realised the importance of the growth of young foreign workers for maintaining Europe's economic, demographic, and industrial growth. Germany, for example, launched a skilled immigration law in 2023 that simplifies work visas, values skills, and allows a stable path to citizenship. Spain and Portugal have also adopted regularisation programmes and preferential entry channels for professional categories in short supply. And the Council of the United Europe has just launched a new platform that will connect non-EU candidates with employers in the EU. This digital platform will facilitate international recruitment in sectors where EU member states suffer from labour shortages, matching job offers with the profiles of non-EU candidates.

It should also be considered that foreign workers fill gaps, such as in social and healthcare assistance. 33% of caregivers and 42% of social and healthcare workers in Italy are of foreign origin. Agricultural activities: 25% of agricultural labourers are non-EU citizens; In the construction sector, companies report that 40% of new workers come from Bangladesh, Albania, Romania, and Senegal.

While awaiting regulatory policies that facilitate and resolve regular immigration problems, groups of companies and associations have started to promote good practices.

For example, in Bergamo, a consortium of mechanical companies trained 50 Senegalese welders in two years, all hired on permanent contracts;

In Ragusa, agricultural cooperatives employ hundreds of Tunisian workers with regular contracts and decent housing; In Trento, an integration project for Moldovan caregivers includes language courses, civic education, and vocational training.

It is in this context that Eltiq Daily Welfare organised the conference "No one leaves themselves alone".

Texts:



Biagio Simonetti

Eltiq InForma

Addressing welfare related to immigration means questioning how a national community organizes

to the needs of those who arrive, without losing the principles on which cohesion in civil society is based. According to Catholic social doctrine, welfare cannot be reduced to purely economic-utilitarian calculations. On the contrary, it is a concrete practice of a vision of man and community, capable of combining "shared responsibility," and "common good."

In this context, the immigrant is not a passive recipient but a person with rights and duties, capable of contributing to the building of a common good. Welfare, therefore, should not be limited to alleviating need but should contribute to building a common good.

The pillar of this type of vision is "subsidiarity," which, when applied to immigration welfare, involves: - valuing local networks, volunteering, and the involvement of ecclesiastical and third-sector organizations; - preventing the State from "evading" human and social responsibilities. The country that welcomes immigrants must prevent two symmetrical pitfalls: mere 'welfarism' that produces dependence, and abandonment.

Catholic Social Doctrine insists that every intervention must be oriented with full respect for fundamental rights. Such rights do not derive from ethnicity or citizenship, nor from a procedural "merit"; in reality, they are inherent to the human person.

From this perspective, even in irregular conditions, rights such as the right to life and health, freedom of movement, and decent housing are essential.

Therefore, immigration welfare represents a space in which welfare has organized the convegno "Nessuno si salva da solo".

Immigration welfare: subsidiarity, ethical support and humanitarian rights



Testi: Biagio Simonetti

Affrontare il welfare legato all'immigrazione significa interrogarsi sul modo in cui una comunità nazionale organizza la propria risposta ai bisogni di chi arriva, senza smarrire i principi su cui si fonda la coesione nelle società civili.

Secondo la dottrina sociale cattolica il welfare non è riducibile a contributo e trasferimenti di ordine puramente economico – utilitaristico, al contrario si tratta di una pratica concreta di una visione dell'uomo e della comunità, capace di coniugare “dignità personale”, “responsabilità condivisa” e “bene comune”.

In questo contesto, l'immigrato non è un destinatario passivo, ma una persona che dispone di diritti e doveri, chiamato—nei limiti del possibile—alla partecipazione alla vita sociale. Il welfare, quindi, non deve limitarsi ad attenuare il bisogno, ma contribuire a costruire relazione, capacità e integrazione.

Il pilastro di questo tipo di visione è la “sussidiarietà” che applicata al welfare dell'immigrazione, implica:

- la valorizzazione di reti territoriali, il volontariato, il coinvolgimento delle realtà ecclesiali e del terzo settore come primi luoghi di prossimità e accompagnamento;
- evitare che lo Stato si “defili” dalle responsabilità umane e sociali. Il Paese che accoglie i migranti deve restare garante dei ‘diritti fondamentali’ e assicurare standard minimi di vita dignitosa;
- Prevenire due derive simmetriche: il mero ‘assistenzialismo’ che produce dipendenza, e l’abbandono che produce marginalità e sfruttamento.

La Dottrina Sociale Cattolica insiste sul fatto che ogni intervento deve essere orientato nel pieno rispetto dei “diritti umani” fondamentali. Tali diritti non derivano dall'etnia o dalla cittadinanza, né da un “merito” di tipo procedurale, in realtà derivano dalla dignità intrinseca di ogni persona.

In questa prospettiva, anche in condizioni di irregolarità restano fermi diritti come: il diritto alla vita e alla salute, l'unità familiare quando tutelabile, l'istruzione per minori, condizioni di lavoro giuste e protezione contro lo sfruttamento.

Pertanto, il welfare dell'immigrazione rappresenta uno spazio in cui “legality” and “humanity” must be constantly combined: alleged legality cannot become a tool of discrimination that annihilates the individual.

Effective welfare cannot be based solely on emergency logic or fragmented interventions, but requires planning, transparency, and shared responsibility between government and community. The presence of immigrants, if managed with coherent policies, can become a resource, including demographically, but this is only possible if investment is made in autonomy and job placement, reducing prolonged dependence on assistance.

Social doctrine also draws attention to a delicate point, namely avoiding opposition and division between “rights of natives” and “rights of immigrants”. The common good is a social construct founded on inclusion and justice. This implies addressing tensions without defensively closing off, but also without accepting without criteria: “charity and truth” must walk together.

Welfare that does not integrate and discriminates leads to many evils such as ghettoisation, an increase in undeclared work, prolonged marginalisation, social and health insecurity, political conflict, and a distorted perception of the other. It is evident, observable, and verifiable that where vulnerability remains ‘without a path’, informal markets and exploitation networks are fostered.

Catholic welfare, as indicated by Social Doctrine, aims to guarantee fundamental social rights in a non-arbitrary way, but to adapt tools to real needs and vulnerability, avoiding both unrealistic levelling and discrimination.

Inclusion requires a coherent “package” of measures such as language teaching and job orientation, school access and cultural and educational support, housing policies that avoid segregation and ghettoisation,

training programmes and regular job placement, regular, cultural mediation and social support.

The governance of welfare along the legal trajectory of all forms of immigration: asylum seekers, recognised refugees and temporary protection is not a technical detail, but a litmus test for the realisation of political civilisation.

It clearly emerges that the “calibration” of aid based on differences in status cannot degenerate into a merely welfare-oriented logic, nor, conversely, into a punishment disguised as order.

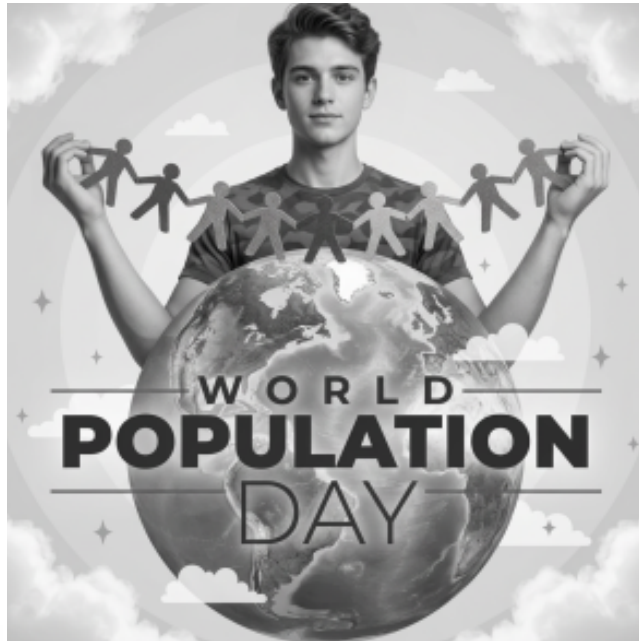
Hence the need for welfare to act as protection during the assessment of each immigrant, namely: health protection (including the dimension of mental health, often invisible until it becomes an emergency), dignified housing, education for minors with prevention of school dropout (which otherwise becomes an incubator of marginalisation), information and guidance on procedures (to prevent bureaucratic complexity from becoming an injustice), and guarantees of legal assistance with clear pathways: for rights to be real, they must be intelligible.

The waiting period for a migrant's acceptance must not degenerate into a form of degradation that, over time, ends up 'crystallising' their vulnerability, effectively transforming into a permanent condition. Immigrants cannot be treated as a number awaiting an outcome, but recognised as individuals with full dignity. If the political authority creates a limbo that destroys hope, it does not serve the common good; it undermines it. And this is not just an ethical issue:

sociologically, degrading waiting periods produce social disorganisation, weaken family networks and reduce the ability to plan one's life; economically, they impose future costs (healthcare, education, social security) that later reappear as emergencies. This is why the reception of immigrants requires a 'strong' welfare system in terms of content and 'proportionate' efforts, with proportional investments in legal assistance, education, work, and illegal labour institutions for the benefit of the community. Respect for every person and welfare extended to

immigrants are measures that simultaneously affect public morality and governance. Successful integration allows for the transformation of cost into investment. In summary, virtuous governance must overcome the opposition

between inclusive welfare and equality on the one hand, and the protection of the labour market on the other. The challenge is to find a way to avoid distortions that then impact the stability of the labour market.



public debate and politics. Economics "confirms" and sociology "explains", is that history and economics converge on a truth often ignored in public debates: exclusion costs, and not just in money. Healthcare costs, educational costs, security costs, and social cohesion costs emerge as consequences of a welfare system that does not prevent, but belatedly repairs.

It is not enough to simply say "we are doing good": dignity must become structure and practice. From a systemic perspective: migration is not an anomaly, but a recurring structure of the global

economic and geopolitical system; legal, irregular channels and the specific dimension of asylum seekers are not separate worlds, but interconnected facets of imbalances between causes, governance, and

effective access to rights. This leads to the challenge not so much sanitari, costi educativi, costi di sicurezza e costi di coesione sociale emergono come conseguenze di un welfare che non previene, ma ripara in ritardo.

Non basta limitarsi a dire “facciamo del bene”: serve che la migrazione diventi struttura e pratica. In una prospettiva sistemica: la migrazione non è un'anomalia, ma una struttura ricorrente del sistema economico e geopolitico globale; i canali legali, irregolari e la dimensione specifica dei richiedenti asilo non sono mondi separati, ma facce interconnesse di squilibri tra

cause, governance e accesso effettivo ai diritti. Ne deriva la sfida non tanto di a "stop" migration, but to create effective protection for those entitled to it. From this perspective, welfare becomes an integral part of moral governance: integration is not only a humanitarian duty,

but a factor of social stability. If welfare is inclusive and well-calibrated by status, protection while waiting integration during assessment, and the presence of the other: it enables them to live with dignity, contribute responsibly and recognise the just order as real. And it is precisely this, in the Catholic grammar of the

Texts: Pier Paolo Visentin

Health, immigration and social mutuality a new frontier of subsidiarity



Pierpaolo Visentin

immigrants in precarious employment

conditions Contemporary societies

are called upon to confront complex phenomena that require new interpretive skills and new organisational responses. The issue of immigration is particularly relevant in this context, as it represents a health protection challenge. Behind the numbers and statistics are people who often face long and difficult integration processes, characterised by job insecurity, economic fragility and sometimes limited knowledge of available services. In this transitional phase, the right to health risks becoming more difficult to exercise precisely when it is most needed. Health, on the other hand, is not a luxury but a necessity. As recalled by the World Health Organisation, it represents a state of physical, psychological and social well-being that is therefore inevitable. That factor is not only the quality of relationships but also the level of income, the presence of a job, the stability of the housing situation, the ability to access services, the level of education, the level of social integration, the level of participation in community life. It is inevitable that factors such as the work environment, the housing situation, the stability of the housing situation, the quality of the relationships and the level of social integration influence directly and indirectly the conditions of health of the people. For many immigrants the path of insertion into the labour market develops through temporary, seasonal or discontinuous situations that often lead to precarious employment. A situation that often involves low income, limited access to services, frequent changes of residence and a reduced capacity to plan their future. Under these conditions, prevention tends to take a back seat to the immediate needs of daily life, while access to healthcare services can become more complex and fragmented.

This creates a situation that deserves particular attention: a generally young and potentially active population that, however, risks accumulating health and social vulnerabilities that will require more and more intervention in the following years. Therefore means protecting not only the individual,

but the general interest of the community. It is in this scenario that the principle of

subsidiarity, one of the fundamental tones of the system, takes on renewed importance. Subsidiarity does not imply a reduction of public responsibilities; on the contrary, it promotes collaboration between institutions, intermediate bodies, and civil society so that each subject contributes, according to their own competencies, to the good. Italian history offers significant examples of this capacity for collaboration. Mutual aid societies, born long before the affirmation of the modern state, have represented for decades a model of social organisation based on principles of solidarity and mutual aid. As recalled by the World Health Organisation, it represents a space for innovation capable of integrating public and private resources, often escaping traditional schemes. It is not about replacing the National Health Service, which continues to represent the pillar of the Italian healthcare system. La mutualità sociale può infatti diventare uno spazio di innovazione capace di integrare le politiche pubbliche e di intercettare bisogni emergenti che spesso sfuggono agli schemi tradizionali. Non si tratta di sostituire il Servizio Sanitario Nazionale, che continua a rappresentare il pilastro fondamentale to health protection in our country, but rather to strengthen its capacity for proximity and inclusion.

The true innovation lies precisely in this integrated vision. Health is not considered a sector separate from other aspects of life, but rather as the result of a multiplicity of interconnected factors.

Caring also means promoting inclusion, reducing inequalities, strengthening people's autonomy and creating favourable conditions for full participation in community life.

A similar reflection concerns the issue of economic resources. Too often, social spending is interpreted exclusively as a cost. a cost.

In reality, numerous national and international experiences show that investing in prevention, timely access to care and social integration produces benefits that are reflected throughout the system.

Reducing barriers to healthcare means reducing inappropriate use of emergency services, promoting early diagnosis of diseases and containing much higher future costs. higher.

From this perspective, a social mutual could become the meeting point between different subjects united by a common interest: public institutions, Third Sector organisations, foundations, responsible businesses and citizens. Everyone would contribute according to their own abilities to the creation of a common fund intended to generate social and health value. health value.

In other words, it would be a matter of moving from an exclusively welfare-oriented logic to a generative logic.

Not just responding to needs, but creating the conditions for people to become protagonists of their own health and integration journey. A model that sees the beneficiary not as a passive recipient of services, but as a resource for the community.

Naturally, every innovative proposal requires further study, verification and experimentation.

The aim of these reflections is not to present a project already defined in every detail, but rather to outline a possible horizon towards which to orient the debate on the sustainability of welfare systems and on new forms of organised solidarity. organised solidarity.

Imagining a social mutual dedicated to immigrant people in precarious employment conditions means building a tool capable of accompanying the citizen along a path that goes beyond the simple provision of healthcare services. It means promoting guidance, health education, prevention, cultural mediation, support in accessing services and connecting with social and employment integration opportunities available locally.

The next contributions will analyse the more operational aspects of this hypothesis: the organisational architecture of the social mutual, the financing mechanisms, the involvement of businesses, the relationship with the National Health Service, the governance tools and the criteria for measuring the social impact produced.

The fundamental question, however, remains clear. In a society characterised by increasing mobility, cultural plurality and transformation of labour markets, health protection requires increasingly capable tools to combine universalism and proximity, rights and responsibilities, solidarity and sustainability. Social mutuality could represent one of the most interesting laboratories in which to experiment with this new synthesis, restoring relevance to an ancient principle: ultimately, taking care of people means taking care of the community as a whole.

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Human Trafficking



Texts: Giuseppe Paccione

Believing that migrant trafficking involves profit or material gain, to achieve the obtaining of irregular entry, human trafficking involves any form of threat or coercion or force aimed at exploitation.

Human trafficking differs from migrant smuggling, as there is no agreement or pact between the criminal and the victim. This means that the tangible income derives from the future exploitation of the transported person by the trafficker.

It is highlighted that the individual initially spontaneously approaches organised criminal networks that manage the illicit migratory service to be transported to the territory of a State, and during the journey, the conduct of the criminal transporter changes, leading to instances of restriction of individual liberty or coercion of will, culminating in a form of progressive exploitation and other manifestations of true trafficking abuses, which aim at the exploitation of the person.

The second Additional Protocol on the fight against transnational organised

crime to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, which can be read as an autonomous legal basis for the granting of international protection, offers a clear definition, according to which the expression 'trafficking in persons' refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, et alia, through the use or threat of use of force or other forms of coercion, or through the giving or receiving of sums of money to obtain the consent of a person having authority over another for the purpose of exploitation. The Protocol on Trafficking in Persons identifies several constraints that may require attention when migrants and refugees are rescued at sea. The objective of the Protocol in question is to prevent and combat human trafficking, offer protection and assistance to victims and, finally, promote cooperation among subjects of international law.

It applies to transnational trafficking involving a well-organised criminal group and to the protection of victims of such crimes. The point is that the Protocol on Trafficking in Persons obliges Contracting States to criminalise this phenomenon.

The correct implementation of this obligation requires legislative measures and concrete enforcement measures such as investigations and prosecutions. The Protocol also addresses the issue of protecting victims of human trafficking, for which Contracting States are required to adhere to the commitment, inter alia, to safeguard the privacy of victims, adopt certain measures to promote access to justice, consider the adoption of measures related to the

physical, psychological and social recovery of trafficking victims and to deem it necessary to allow victims to remain in their territories, on a temporary or permanent basis. Instead of establishing a right for victims to remain, the Protocol itself relies on the duty of each Contracting State to accept its own citizens. The Protocol requires the Contracting State, of which a trafficking victim is a citizen or permanent resident, to facilitate and accept the return of the latter, without unjustified reason or unreasonable delay. Despite the reference to the transition to voluntary repatriation, it seems clear that the treatment provided for those who have been victims of trafficking is expulsion,

rather than permission to stay.

It should be remembered that Contracting States are obliged to prevent and combat the phenomenon of human trafficking, exchange information and train officials who are able to curb human trafficking. Contracting States must strengthen border controls necessary to prevent and detect trafficking in persons. Compared to the Protocol on the Smuggling of

Migrants, the Protocol on Trafficking in persons is intended to prevent and contrast the phenomenon of the trafficking of individuals, exchange information and form persons such as officials who are able to curb human trafficking. Contracting States must strengthen border controls necessary to prevent and detect trafficking in persons. Compared to the Protocol on the Smuggling of

Rispetto al Protocollo sul traffico di migranti, il Protocollo sulla tratta di persone focuses on the protection and assistance of victims.

The draft final document of the UN Conference on the Global Compact for Migration stresses the importance of "ensuring that definitions of human trafficking used in legislation,

in policy and migration planning, as well as in judicial proceedings, are consistent with international law, in order to distinguish between the crimes of human trafficking and migrant smuggling." If human trafficking is confused with migrant smuggling, there is a risk that victims may not receive the protection and assistance to which they are entitled.

Despite the possible overuse of the word 'trafficking' in the context of irregular migration by sea, it seems obvious that the Protocol on human trafficking entails constraints that require great care in circumstances where migrants and refugees are rescued at sea. Within groups of rescued migrants and refugees, during rescue operations at sea, there may be individuals who have played a role in the human trafficking structure.

Clearly, rescued survivors can be perpetrators, but also victims. In any case, the States Parties to the Protocol on human trafficking must take measures to identify and investigate those suspected of trafficking. While such persons, who have committed the crime of trafficking, must be investigated and prosecuted, obviously depending on the case, victims must be protected and receive all necessary assistance.

Suspects and victims rescued at sea may therefore not be delivered to safe areas where they may become victims of further investigations and possible judicial proceedings or protection and assistance.

The flag State of a warship or public service vessel or a vessel under the command of an officer, whose crew has suspicions that members of a group of migrants and refugees, who have embarked, during the search and rescue operation, are involved in human trafficking, is therefore obliged to act in such a way as not to make further measures impossible.

It can be concluded that international law, a tool for combating transnational organised crime,



does nothing more than designate the entire architecture of the legal branch to prevent and suppress transnational criminal networks.

It outlines a range of constraints that may not conceal situations where migrants and refugees are rescued from the danger of losing their lives during sea crossings. The Additional Protocol concerning the smuggling of migrants appears to be of primary importance in the context of irregular maritime migration. It has also been highlighted that the States Parties to Protocol I must prosecute those who criminalise such trafficking by sea, but also cooperate to prevent and suppress it.

In this regard, the Protocol provides an operational framework for the measures to be taken to block the smuggling of migrants, which occurs on the high seas. It allows the flag State to request support from other States Parties and other subjects of international law to request the consent of the flag State for boarding, for search or other appropriate measures concerning vessels involved in operations against ships engaged in the illicit machinery of migrant smuggling.

Due to the comprehensive nature of international maritime law, the operational framework for measures as tools

to combat migrant smuggling at sea must be made applicable consistently in conjunction with the general legal framework for jurisdiction over vessels at sea.

However, it seems clear that the principale contributo della operational structure, enshrined in the Protocol, is not to provide additional reasons for interference with ships at sea, but rather to clarify the procedures for requests for authorisations from the flag State.

Human trafficking is entirely different from migrant smuggling, not only for the mere reason that it does not require irregular entry, but also because it involves an element of exploitation with coercive undertones.

States Parties to the Protocol on human trafficking are bound to criminalise this phenomenon, but those who are victims must be kept outside the sphere of criminalisation; indeed, they must be protected and offered all assistance. Even so, victims generally do not have the right to reside in the territory of a State where they have been subjected to illicit human trafficking.

On the migratory phenomenon in the era of globalisation

The actions of the Pontiffs in recent history



Texts: Vincenzo Gaglione

When analysing the phenomenon from a historical perspective, the role of the Pontiffs of the last century, primarily that of Eugenio Pacelli, should be remembered.

On 13 March 1946, Pius XII addressed the issue of immigration by greeting two American personalities: Mr. Ugo Carusi, of the Department of Justice, Commissioner for Immigration, and Mr. Howard R. Travers, of the US State Department.

The Pope specified that, at a historical moment like that experienced in the difficult years of the early 20th century,

when America had offered generous and hospitable asylum to people from other lands, oppressed by tyranny, forced by poverty, or religious persecution and induced to seek salvation in exile, it was necessary to bear in mind "not only the interest of the immigrant, but also the well-being of the nation. However, it is not an exaggeration - we are certain - if we promise ourselves that in the process of restriction, Christian charity and human solidarity existing among men, all children of one God and eternal Father, will not be forgotten. Immigration can contribute to the solution of one of Europe's most serious problems, a problem that has been aggravated by the inhumane forced deportation of defenceless and innocent populations." The Venerable Pius XII was the author of the first pontifical document on the care of immigrants: this is the apostolic constitution "Exsul familia", published on 1 August 1952, which provided instructions on the spiritual assistance of migrants.

A large part of the document concerns Italian emigration, which was a significant phenomenon at that time.

"Exsul Familia" is considered the Magna Carta of migrant pastoral care, published a few years after the end of the Second World War, and the Pope chose this title for an explicit reference to the "Holy

Family of Nazareth" forced by historical events to live a forced migration, in the same way as many Italian families

in the last century.

"The situation in Europe and the migranti, data alle stampe pochi anni dopo la fine della seconda guerra mondiale e il Papa scelse tale titolo per un esplicito riferimento alla "Sacra Famiglia di Nazareth" costretta dagli eventi storici a vivere una migrazione forzata, in maniera uguale a quanto accadeva a molte famiglie italiane nel secolo scorso

«La situazione dell'Europa e del world, seven years after the conclusion of the bloody conflict that cost the lives - according to prevailing estimates - of around 55 million people, mostly civilians, still recorded a high number of war displaced people.» And it is in this scenario of devastation and reconstruction, marked by strong movements of popular masses, that Pope Pacelli's apostolic constitution is inserted, he «who had tried to avoid that war and then dedicated himself to helping the victims.»

Pius XII had foreseen specific pastoral care for migrants, up to the second generation. The Pope recalls the religious orders that, through the centuries, dedicated themselves to the care of migrants and foreigners.

Even in Rome, special shelters and accommodation were established, from the 8th century, by pontifical decree.

Pius XII presents Pius VI and Pius VII who welcomed emigrants into the Papal States. Then again Leo XIII, Saint Pius X and Benedict XV. He also reviews the Saints and Blessed who spent their lives assisting foreigners, refugees and stateless people.



The “Exsul Familia” guided the immigration policy of many Catholic countries. The Church has undertaken specific activities to assist all people “on the move” and, precisely in this, Pope Pacelli's document continues to offer a solid point of reference. This was explained by Benedict XVI, in the Audience granted to the participants of the VI World Congress for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees, held in Rome in 2009: «Indeed, if the migratory phenomenon is as old as the history of humanity, it has never had the great importance it has today, due to the number and complexity of its problems. It now affects almost all countries in the world and is part of the vast process of globalisation» Pope Ratzinger observed when welcoming the participants to the congress on 9 November 2009, at the Clementine Hall.

Pope Francis' magisterium on migrants and refugees is also particularly rich; there are numerous messages, homilies and speeches that the Holy Father has dedicated to the care of migrants.

Clear references to the same theme are also present in more substantial documents, such as the apostolic exhortations *Evangelii gaudium* (2013), *Amoris laetitia* (2016), *Gaudete et exsultate* (2018), *Christus vivit* (2019), and the encyclical *Laudato si'* (2015).

These teachings, some themes already present in *Exsul familia* are revisited and re-examined. These are important elements of migratory pastoral care that the Holy Father reinterprets and contextualises in today's world, in the spirit of the updating desired by the Second Vatican Council.

It is possible to highlight a coincidence between the historical contexts of the two Pontiffs, which is easily deducible from number 99 of “*Exsul familia*”, dedicated to explaining the reason for the historical excursus of the first title; this seemed all the more necessary in our days, in which the provident activity of Mother Church is so falsely criticised, ignored and contested by adversaries precisely in that field of charity, which she was the first to cultivate and not infrequently was left alone to cultivate.

Among the important actions of the Church in favour of migrants, Pius XII does not fail to mention the activities promoted by Bishops and Priests to facilitate the adaptation process and the construction of convivial societies. Drawing on the results of the most recent human and social sciences, Francis prefers to speak of integration, «which is neither assimilation nor incorporation, it is a bidirectional process, which is essentially based on the mutual recognition of the other's cultural richness.»



The Pope has always stated that he considers the integration between migrants and natives to be a fundamental element for the building of truly Catholic communities.

The elements illustrated are sufficient to highlight a clear continuity in the magisterium of the two Pontiffs. This is particularly evident in the pastoral concerns expressed, in the recommendations directed to the various actors, and in the operational responses outlined. Once again, the extreme usefulness of drawing upon the Church's tradition to interpret current challenges in the field of migration is revealed.

It constitutes a true mine of reflections and operational insights that should be carefully considered to develop adequate and effective pastoral responses.

The migratory phenomenon is characterised by extreme variability, unpredictability, and complexity.

These connotations necessitate a continuous review of interpretations aimed at identifying the pastoral challenges and the responses that the Church is called to provide. Both Pius XII and Pope Francis have been deeply committed to this exercise of contextualisation and updating, necessary to make the Church's missionary action more prophetic, adequate, and effective for, among, and with migrants.

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more prophetic, adequate, and effective the missionary action of the Church for, among, and with migrants.

Finally, although never explicitly cited, it is not difficult to read between the lines of "Exsul familia" the four verbs with which Pope Francis wished to articulate the ministry among migrants and refugees: "welcome, protect, promote and integrate".

What is stated in the section "Care in hospitality" can well be understood as nell'ospitalità" ben può essere inteso come elaboration of the first verb.

The points "Preserving from pitfalls and commitment against slavery" can be correctly attributed to the verb "to protect". The point "Advocacy Action" can then be referred to the verb "to promote". What is expressed as "Commitment to integration" can be easily understood as the realisation of the last verb.

Even the current Pontiff, Pope Leo XIV (elected in May 2025), continues to focus on the defence of human dignity, welcome, and solidarity in migration policies, in continuity with previous magisterium but with a call for balance in the management of "borders", so that migrants, refugees, and displaced persons, witnesses of hope and faith, are not treated as a burden; thus emphasising the need to "welcome, accompany, promote, and integrate". integrate".

The Pontiff, on several occasions, recalling the "balance in border management", recognises the right of states to regulate borders, always calling for respect for the human dignity of every person. Hence, the firm stance in combating all forms of trafficking and exploitation. Finally, stating that the Church cannot address the migration crisis alone, he has repeatedly called for greater international involvement to address the root causes of migration and defend the dignity of migrants.

Therefore, even now in the current global situation greatly characterised by cultural, political, economic, religious, and social diversity, where the migratory phenomenon urges countries and international communities to promote initiatives, the "Exsul familia" provides answers and guidance to seize new opportunities.

Bembereké, fourteen years later: twenty-five boys to be nurtured into men, year by year



Text: Rev. P. Alfonso M. Bruno F.I.

*The Children's Village
dedicated to Saint Maximilian
Kolbe,
founded by the Franciscan Friars
of the Immaculate in Northern
Benin, continues its
mission.
But costs are rising and
support is essential*

It was 25 August 2012 when, in the small town of Bembereké, in Northern Benin, the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate inaugurated the first mini-children's village dedicated to Saint Maximilian Maria Kolbe — the martyr of Auschwitz, the friar who chose to die in place of another. A choice of name that was not accidental: that man had given his life for the weakest and most persecuted, and that work was born to do the same, every day, silently and concretely. concretely. concretely.

The Bishop of N'Dali, the Prefect of Atakora, the Mayor of Bembereké, the Consul of Benin in Naples, a delegation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italian benefactors, and local Muslim dignitaries were present — in a majority-Islamic region where the friars have been operating since 1991 with mutual respect and shared common needs. respect and shared common needs. respect and shared common needs.

The complex, built with an M-shaped plan — Maria and Massimiliano together — was designed to accommodate up to thirty children and adolescents, offering them study rooms, play areas, food, accommodation, and education.

Who are today's thirty young people? Twelve years later, the structure is alive. Today, it hosts thirty adolescents. They are children of very poor families, often from villages far from the city, where access to any form of secondary education is practically impossible. Many of them are orphans — of one or both parents. They are young people who, without this structure, would have no alternative: neither school, nor a future different from inherited poverty. The friars take care of everything: food and accommodation, enrolment and school supplies, daily after-school care, transport between the facility and the city's schools, and healthcare expenses.

No child is left behind due to lack of means. The total annual cost to maintain this presence is approximately €50,000 — just over €1,600 per child, less than €140 per month. It's little, in absolute terms. It's everything, for those who have nothing.

The house stands, but needs care. The climate of northern Benin is not kind to buildings. The torrential rains of the rainy season alternate with the relentless sun of the dry season; heat and humidity accelerate the deterioration of systems and surfaces much faster than in Europe. Europe. Europe.

Twelve years of intensive use, twenty-five young people living, studying, growing every day within those walls, inevitably leave their mark. sign.

The structure currently requires both routine and extraordinary maintenance: the restrooms, electrical and plumbing systems, and internal and external painting. These are not luxury works. They are the minimum condition for the house to remain a dignified place for those who live in it. A place that is not just a roof, but a space in which to grow with the dignity that every human being deserves. deserves.

In summary: what does your contribution support?

- Board and lodging for 30 adolescents
- School enrolment, books, materials, after-school programmes
- Daily transport to the city's schools
- Healthcare expenses for each hosted child
- Maintenance of the structure: systems, sanitary facilities, painting (up to €10,000 per year)
- Electricity (approximately €6,000 per year).

A continuing mission

The Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate have been present in Benin since 1991. In just over thirty years, they have built an educational Catholic radio station, a Marian shrine, a formation house for novices from all over French-speaking Africa — and this village, which is perhaps their most silent and concrete work. They don't make headlines. They don't ask for visibility. They only ask for what is needed to move forward: the support of those who believe that a boy born in a poor village in Northern Benin deserves the same opportunity as a boy born elsewhere. elsewhere.

Saint Maximilian Kolbe chose to die in place of a family man in the hunger bunker at Auschwitz. Not because he was forced to. Because he had decided that the life of another was worth as much as his own. Those twenty-five boys from Bembereké know almost nothing about him. But they live, every day, in a house that bears his name — and which silently says the same thing: that their lives are worthwhile. That they deserve a future. That humanity grows. That hope fuels the common good and builds a better world. better world. better world.

"I was a stranger"

A book that shows the way to the common good



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in Photo: Father Alfonso M Bruno



public debate with arguments based
— anthropologically, ethically,

The book "I was a stranger" published by Delta 3 Edizioni, written by Biagio Simonetti and Father Alfonso Bruno and distributed at the conference "No one is saved alone" (27 June 2026), is a collective work that addresses the theme of immigration with an approach that is analytical, narrative, and testimonial, proposing itself as a tool for understanding and dialogue on one of the most relevant and controversial phenomena of our time. The book develops along a structured path that combines historical reflection, socio-economic analysis, and proposed solutions, while maintaining a constant focus on the human dimension of the migratory experience, on reception, on shared responsibility, and on the recognition of the dignity of every person.

The book traces the evolution of

migratory phenomena, from the great ancient migrations to contemporary globalised flows, highlighting their main causes: poverty, conflicts, political instability, and climate change. It also analyses

the different migratory channels – regular, irregular, and those linked to international protection – offering a clear and systematic picture of the dynamics of access and movement.

In addition, it analyses and contextualises the economic impacts and contribution to

the labour market and growth; it also addresses the social and cultural dimensions, with particular attention to the themes of reception, integration, and identity. There are also critical issues related to the management of flows and social tensions, but the text proposes an interpretation that values immigration as a potential resource, if adequately governed.

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in Photo: Biagio Simonetti

The proposed policies for improved governance and potential solutions within a 'welfare for immigration' context, as a set of tools and services necessary to foster inclusion and social cohesion, are significant.

The cultural and social objectives of the book are manifold: to provide accurate and in-depth information, to combat stereotypes and prejudices, to promote a culture of encounter, and to contribute to the construction of more equitable and effective policies and practices. The migratory experience is represented not only as a structural phenomenon, but as a complex human journey, made of hopes, difficulties, and possibilities for redemption, giving voice and dignity back to those who too often remain invisible victims.

The authors wrote in their conclusions that "The analytical path taken in this essay has traversed three interconnected levels of reflection: the empirical analysis of the impacts and challenges of immigration in Italy; the critique of national and international policies in the light of available evidence; and the normative evaluation of these policies in the light of the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The convergence of these three levels has made it possible to outline an integrated framework that overcomes both economic reductionism and abstract moralism."

The starting point is incontrovertible: Italy has a structural need for immigration to support its own economic and welfare system in a context of demographic decline that is difficult to reverse in the short and medium term. Unfortunately, the bureaucratic mechanism of the flows decree continues to transform formal entry authorisations into a much more limited concession in reality:

entries fuels the cycle of irregularity/exploitation/social tension/discrimination that the social doctrine of the Church has qualified as ethically unacceptable.

The first conclusion of this essay is that reforming the legal entry system is not just another policy option, but a functional necessity for maintaining the Italian social model and a moral imperative founded on the right to dignified work that the Catholic Church, the Italian Constitution, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognise for every human person. This reform requires long-term political will and the ability to construct a public discourse that transcends short-term instrumentalisation.

The Social Doctrine of the Church has

developed, over its centuries-long journey, a coherent and articulated doctrinal corpus on the issue of migration. The principles of human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, the universal destination of goods, the preferential option for the poor, and the common good are not mere abstract statements but interpretive tools that allow for a precise evaluation of concrete policies.

The “theology of the migrant” developed by Pope Francis, with the conjugation of the four verbs: welcome, protect, promote,

and integrate within the context of a general horizon of universal fraternity, specified and illustrated in the Encyclical “Fratelli tutti”, offer the anthropological foundation upon which to build policies capable of respecting the dignity and rights of every person in movement.

The second conclusion is that the DSC not only legitimises but requires the commitment of Christian communities and Catholics in politics for the reform of migration policies and does not intend to impose a confessional vision in a

Texts: Edited by Eltiq Informa

Eltiq InForma

Via XX Settembre 98/g

Publisher: Eltiq daily welfare

empirically — that contrast with prejudicial, discriminatory, and racist views and indicate a path of dialogue. empiricamente — che contrastano con le visioni pregiudiziali, discriminatorie e razziste e indicano una via di dialogo between faith and reason, between Christianity and civil power, which is characterised as a valuable contribution even in pluralistic and multi-religious contexts.

A book in total harmony with Pope Leo XIV who, speaking on 8 June at the Congress of Deputies in Spain, said: “The Church ‘walks with humanity’, shares its hopes and wounds, listens to the questions of every age and allows itself to be challenged ‘by all that concerns the existence of men and women today’. For this reason, when it addresses public life, it does so with respect for the specific mission of institutions and the legitimate responsibility of those who have received the mandate to legislate. It recognises ‘the autonomy of earthly realities’ and ‘the distinction between the ecclesial community and the political community’; and, precisely based on this awareness, it offers a reflection that stems from the desire to serve the common good and to recall what truly makes human coexistence human.”

Regarding the phenomenon of immigration, Pope Leo XIV emphasised: “The affirmation of human dignity cannot remain abstract when so many people are forced to leave everything to seek peace, security, and a future. The tragic migratory drama today challenges the conscience of nations and the ethical foundation of the international order. Numerous men, women, and children are forced, due to often dramatic circumstances, to leave their communities and leave behind loved ones, histories, and ties. This reality goes beyond any purely demographic or economic interpretation: it constitutes an eminently moral and legal issue.

“Where a person is discriminated against due to their national, ethnic, religious, or linguistic origin, or due to their economic or social condition, the universal principle of the equal dignity of all human beings is gravely violated.”

“The situation of migrants and refugees requires a response that places people at its centre, addresses the causes that force them to leave, and goes beyond the mere management of flows. From this arises a dual need for social justice: to offer safe and legal pathways, respectful reception, and real possibilities for integration; and, at the same time, to promote the right to remain in one's own land, working so that no one has to abandon their home due to a lack of peace, security, or dignified living conditions, due to economic inequalities and the effects of the climate crisis.”

the structural discrepancy between declared needs, formal authorisations, and actual

“In recent years, increasingly dangerous routes have highlighted the very high cost of this reality, often hidden or ignored. Many people continue to be victims of traffickers and smugglers who take advantage of their desperation. It is necessary to strengthen prevention, rescue, and assistance to victims, especially within the framework of regional and multilateral cooperation.”

“No nation can face a challenge of this magnitude alone,” Pope Leo XIV concluded. “For this reason, a coordinated, supportive, and effective response is essential, capable of guaranteeing protection, reception, and real opportunities for integration for those who emigrate. When the institutional response is close, fair, and coordinated, borders cease to be places of abandonment and can become spaces for the responsible protection of human dignity.”

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