

The logo features the letters 'JCoR' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a large, stylized shape. This shape is composed of several overlapping, curved segments in shades of orange, red, and purple. The background is a gradient of blue, with white circuit-like lines and nodes scattered across it, particularly on the left and right sides.

JCoR

THE CHURCH ON MIGRATION

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WORKSHOP ON MIGRATION

The Catholic Church over centuries has been a significant world leader in promoting the well-being of refugees and migrants. With its pastoral presence, material support and commitment to the defense of their human dignity, the Church has been close to refugees and migrants. From time immemorial, Popes have placed the topic of refugees and migrants at the centre and in the 21st Century, Pope Francis made this topic part of his agenda.



Since 2013 when Pope Francis began his pontificate, the Holy Father's mission in relationship to refugees and migrants had been twofold:

- to “encourage Christians around the world to have a human-oriented and welcoming approach to migrants” and
- to make the refugees and migrants situation visible globally and to encourage a global response.

His aim is that the world should consider migrants as a significant part of their society that bring not threats but opportunities. Hence, he can be discerned as one responding to the duty the Catechism of the Catholic Church places on every Catholic person.



“It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society.”

(CCC 1992, nn. 1913–1914)



For Pope Francis to realize his mission, he employs two main strategies:

- **Accessibility:** the intense media coverage of an issue so that the issue remains in the audience's memories
- **Framing:** the process of defining problems, analyzing them, imposing moral judgements and suggesting solutions to these problems



Regarding accessibility, Pope Francis seizes every opportunity to make “headlines” on the issue of immigrants and refugees. How often the media covers the issue matters to him because

- frequent coverage is aimed at raising public awareness of refugees. He sees this intervention as a springboard to achieving the goal; a just and stable solution for migrants and refugees worldwide.
- He sees the need to “promote a solid consensus on the need of finding a solution for this humanitarian drama, so citizens and civil society will press their representatives at the levels of their public organizations...to invest people and resources into it....”



In public awareness raising, the Pope targets everyone but his approach is to reach those closer to him first. Thus, his persuasive action begins in the Church, targeting:

- Bishops
- the clergy
- Religious
- Catholic Faithful in general

His mobilization of ordinary people could be more effective than simply focusing on influencing decision-makers. He aims to transform the world through his people. This is why he persuades Catholics to reach the peripheries.



STRATEGIES

To communicate the issue of migrants and refugees to the world, the Pope uses three strategies:

- **Speeches**
- **Apostolic journeys**
- **Virtual leadership**

These strategies are the three steps to his agenda setting through which he realizes the refugee policy.



SPEECHES

- In 12 speeches, the Pope mentioned migrants and refugees over 200 times, a sign that migration is one of his priority issues for communication and he calls this issue “the sign of the times”.
- In his refugee speeches, he appeals to the whole world. His objective is to make the refugee situation globally visible and to encourage a global response.
- He condemns the culture of comfort arguing that this culture makes people only think about themselves, making them “insensitive to the cries of others and live in a soap bubble, which, however lovely are insubstantial”. These he argues provide a “fleeting and empty illusion leading to globalization of indifference, a phrase he mentions 25 times.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS

- Lampedusa (8th July, 2013)
- Lesbos (16th April, 2016)
- Myanmar and Bangladesh (26th November, 2017-
December, 2017)



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: LAMPEDUSA

- The journey to Lampedusa was his first trip as a Pope. His speech on this Island has been considered as an “encyclical of his pontificate”.
- He chose Lampedusa because he had decided that the “migration policy and its framing will come from himself and from his church.
- Thus, this Italian Island stands as a “symbolic gate to the European paradise for many migrants and the last stop of their earthly journey for thousands”.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: LAMPEDUSA

- Over 20,000 people from Africa and other parts of the world lost lives on this Island in their attempt to reach the coasts of Europe.
- His message on this Island was for the world, but he also wanted to specifically communicate to the people of Europe and other parts of the wealthy world to reflect on what they have become.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: LAMPEDUSA

He challenged them in these words:

- *Today too, the question has to be asked: Who is responsible for the blood of these brothers and sisters of ours? Nobody! That is our answer: It isn't me; I don't have anything to do with it; it must be someone else, but certainly not me. (Francis 2013b).*
- One outcome of Lampedusa is that a couple that listened to him decided to commit time and resources to help refugees.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: LESBOS (GREECE)

The Pope highlighted the power of personal encounter. He addressed refugees in these words:

I have wanted to be with you today. I want to tell you that you are not alone. In these weeks and months, you have endured much suffering in your search for a better life. Many of you felt forced to flee situations of conflict and persecution for the sake, above all, of your children, your little ones. You have made great sacrifices for your families. You know the pain of having left behind everything that is dear to you and—what is perhaps most difficult—not knowing what the future will bring. Many others like you are also in camps or towns, waiting, hoping to build a new life on this continent. (Francis 2016)



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: LESBOS

In his interaction with refugees, he

- blessed children by kissing their foreheads and making crosses on their foreheads
- shook hands with those who stood in his way.

On his return to the Vatican, he invited Muslim families onto the Papal plane who were fleeing Islamic violence in Syria, their homeland. This gesture was a lesson to the world that it should accept refugees and not ignore the problem that is showing no signs of concluding yet.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH

- The Pope wanted to visit the 200,000 Catholics living in a Buddhist-majority nation of Myanmar, but he also wanted to raise the issue of the Muslim minority of the country, the Rohingya.
- According to the Human Rights Watch, more than 671,000 Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine State had fled to escape the military's large-scale campaign of ethnic cleansing in August, 2017.
- The Rohingya have been subjected to mass killings, widespread arson, and sexual violence by security forces.



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS: MYANMAR AND BANGLADESH

With a face of the merciful father, Pope Francis addressed the Rohingya:

There is little that we can do because your tragedy is so great. But let us make room in our heart. In the name of everyone, of those who persecute you, of those who have wronged you, above all for the indifference of the world, I ask your forgiveness (...). The presence of God, today, is also called 'Rohingya'. May each of us respond in his or her own way. (Francis 2017d).



APOSTOLIC JOURNEYS:

In all the visits, the Pope

- made headlines, thus profiling the issue of refugees and migrants and their plight
- held press conferences after returning to Rome in order to continue bringing the issue of migrants and refugees into public space



VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP

- Pope Francis' influence is not only in the physical world but in the virtual space too, the new social environment for leadership.
- The Pope's global leadership is especially visible on his Twitter account. The year after his election, the Pope's account was fourth in the world in terms of media mentions.
- In November, 2013, 510,000 tweets mentioned him. His relevance and leadership from the quantitative point has continued to grow.
- It is through such that he sets the world agenda for refugees and migrants. Tweets concerning migration go viral any time the Pope posts them followed by more than 40 million people.



STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY ABOUT MIGRATION

- A vision before Acting
- A positive mentality to take the lead in promoting change
- Giving maximum attention to the content



STRATEGIES: VISION

- Francis has the vision of the issue he plans to put on the agenda. His choice of the first Papal trip to Lampedusa was strategic.
- His proactive **mentality** entails that projects are put into operation. He made news when at Lampedusa, he threw into the sea a wreath in memory of over 20,000 people who died in those waters.
- He also put another tragedy at the centre of the world's attention when he brought a refugee family of Syrian origin on his plane from Lesbos to the Vatican and he provided apartments to refugee families.
- Beyond these actions, the Pope established a Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development with a Migrant and Refugee section.



STRATEGIES: POSITIVE MENTALITY

Pope Francis usually talks about migration in a positive light and tries to reframe migration issues. Frequently used key words can be broken into three subjects:

- 1. Putting the human face onto migration issues**
- 2. Seeing a migrant as an opportunity, not a threat**
- 3. Presenting his actions as gospel-focused and not politics-driven even though they influence policy on a global scale**



POSITIVE MENTALITY: HUMANS, NOT NUMBERS

When thousands of migrants arrived at European borders in 2015, the difference between the Pope's discourse and mainstream press headlines were clear.

- **Media's focus:** Numbers without any reference to migrants or people. When media frames migrants in terms of the surge in numbers, the message the public obtains is that of a threat and a response could be that when the EU is not able to find a way to cope, they would need to send migrants home without knowing their reasons for coming to Europe or their flight.
- **Francis' focus:** Migrants are our brothers and sisters, each of whom has a name and a story to tell. ("brothers," "sisters," "people," "humanity" appear 172 times in his speeches)



POSITIVE MENTALITY: MIGRATION AS OPPORTUNITY

The Pope highlights:

- contributions made by migrants to countries of destination
- contributions made by migrants to their countries of origin

This is an important counter-narrative to those that tend to depict migration as a threat.



STRATEGIES: GOSPEL-DRIVEN GLOBAL POLICY

- The Pope focuses his attention on the one who inspires his action (God) and on the Institution that leads (the Church).
- The Gospel and Social Teaching of the Church are his sources of inspiration for fulfillment of his responsibility as leader regarding the fate of million of the migrants around the world.
- Examples:
 - An episode in Jesus's life when on his way to Jerusalem, he was not accepted because he was not a local, he came from a different place and had a different religion.
 - When Jesus was about to be taken to heaven, he sent messengers ahead into a Samaritan village to get things ready, but the people did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem.



STRATEGIES: GOSPEL-DRIVEN GLOBAL POLICY

- He feels obliged by the Second Vatican Council and the rest of the Doctrine of the Church.
- He reduces his approach to migrants in four action points and mentions a corresponding biblical verse for each :
 - Welcoming (Hebrews 13:2)
 - Protecting (Psalms 146:9)
 - Promoting (Deut:10:18-19)
 - Integrating refugees (Ephesians 2:19)
- He sets goals to be achieved by societies while implementing the policy.



RESOURCES FROM THE “MIGRANTS & REFUGEES SECTION” OF THE VATICAN DICASTERY FOR INTEGRAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

- Main webpage: <https://migrants-refugees.va/>
- Pastoral Orientations & other Resources on [Climate-Displaced People](#)
- Pastoral Orientations & other Resources on [Human Trafficking](#)
- Pastoral Orientations & other Resources on [Internally Displaced People](#)
- Pastoral Orientations & other Resources on [Young Migrants](#)
- [Migratory Profiles](#)

