

Role of the Receiving and Sending Church as outlined in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*

Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi (EMCC), issued by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People in May 2003 has placed emphasis on the role of the receiving church. This emphasis arises for many reasons among which there are practical and administrative duties whereby the pastoral care of immigrants are better served. The duty of care and need for fraternal vigilance needs to be vested in one particular agent of authority, notably the receiving Church, where the migrant is domicile. This is not to the exclusion of a role for the Sending Church. 'To ensure that the pastoral care of migrants may be one of communion, it is essential that the Churches of Departure and Arrival establish an intense collaboration with one another' [para 70]

At the heart of this document is a wish to take account of the new norms in Canon Law [para 3] while also being open to new developments in pastoral structures in order to guarantee communion between pastoral workers and the local hierarchy [para 3]. In a very reflective manner, the document presents the hazards that migrants may experience in a world that is now characterised by human mobility. Responding to this ever growing phenomenon, the document advises that the pastoral worker and host communities offer 'loving attention to "people on the move"' [para 11].

Article 1 of the Juridical Pastoral Regulations, paragraph 2, states that 'it is the duty of the parish priest and the diocesan or eparchial bishop to extend to them (migrants) the same pastoral care as is due to their own autochthonous subjects'. Article 1, paragraph 3, advises that 'especially when groups of immigrants are numerous, the churches of their origin have the responsibility of cooperating with the churches of arrival to facilitate efficacious and suitable pastoral assistance'.

Section 4 of the Juridical Regulations relates that 'the spiritual care of the faithful is the duty *in primis* of the diocesan or eparchial bishop.' [Article 16, para 2]

Article 18 outlines the role of the Church of origin of the migrant. "There is a serious duty" to provide:

- religious formation so they can face serious difficulties
- seek out presbyters who are suited to the pastoral care of Emigrants
- shall not neglect to enter into close relations with the Episcopal Conference or corresponding hierarchical structure of the nation *ad quam*

Article 19, paragraph 1 advises that "in countries to which migrants go or which they leave in large numbers, the Episcopal conferences and the competent hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic churches shall set up a special national commission for migration". Where there are fewer numbers involved in migration, Episcopal Conference are asked to have a Bishop promoter in place. [Article 19, para 2]

Article 20, paragraphs 1 and 2 outlines the distinct role of the Migration Commission and the Bishop promoter.

§1. It is the duty of the Migration Commission or the bishop promoter:

1. to gather information on the migration situation in the country and to pass on useful data to the diocesan/eparchial bishops, also in contact with the centres for migration studies;
2. to animate and stimulate the relevant diocesan commissions, which in turn will do the same with respect to those parochial commissions concerned with the vast and more general phenomenon of human mobility;
3. to receive requests for chaplains/missionaries from the bishops of dioceses/eparchies in which there is immigration, and introduce to them the presbyters proposed for this ministry;
4. to propose to the Episcopal Conference and the corresponding hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches, when necessary, the appointment of a national coordinator for the chaplains/missionaries;
5. to establish opportune contacts with Episcopal Conferences and the corresponding hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches concerned;
6. to establish opportune contacts with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and to pass on indications received from the Council to the diocesan or eparchial bishops;
7. to send an annual report on the situation of the pastoral care of migrants to the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, to the Episcopal Conference, to the corresponding hierarchical structures of the Eastern Catholic Churches, and also to the diocesan/eparchial bishops.

§2. It is the task of the national director:

1. to facilitate in general – also in reference to Art. 11 – the relations of the bishops of his own country with the national commission or with the bishop promoter;
2. to compile the report mentioned in point 7, §1 of this Article.

In conclusion I refer to the presentation entitled; EMCC :a Response of the Church to the Migration Phenomenon Today by Cardinal Stephen Fumio Hamao, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. (People on the Move; N° 97, April 2005)

'13. Cooperation among the local Churches

The responses of the Church obviously require cooperation among local Churches. *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* affirms: “The responsibility of diocesan bishops ... [with regard to the pastoral care of migrants] is unequivocally reaffirmed, both for the

Church of origin and the Church of arrival” (no. 28). Thus, while it is the task of the Church of arrival to offer pastoral care to all the faithful in its territory, it is important for migrants to be accompanied by priests and/or other pastoral agents who are from or have carried out missionary work in their country of origin. They understand not only their language, but also their culture and mentality. This is capital in helping them live and grow in the faith and face, as mature Christians, all the vicissitudes they encounter in their life as migrants, refugees and foreign students. This is why close collaboration between the Church of origin and the Church of arrival is necessary.’

Such collaboration will also help migrants and refugees become part and parcel of the community of the local Church, where no one is a foreigner, where even those who profess a different religion are welcome, because Jesus Christ died for each and every person.’

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