**Migrating helped build my present**

The Holy Father writes that *“Building the future with migrants and refugees also means recognising and appreciating how much each of them can contribute in the process of construction.”* I would like to share how my experience as a migrant has enriched the mission entrusted to me today at the Section.

During the war, my family had to migrate to Canada. We were warmly welcomed and quickly integrated into the local community through our school, our parish and the various activities in which we participated.

As a teenager, I felt very guilty for leaving my country behind. Integration was challenging for me. At school, I was told to blend in normally and keep my feelings to myself, as if my life was normal, but it wasn't! I was filled with anger, sadness and frustration. Unfortunately, I was not able to hide it and was often in trouble! Thankfully, my English teacher helped me express my anger by making me write daily in a journal that he had to correct in order to assess my writing skills. My teacher and I were not of the same religion, his empathy towards me made me experience kindness and broke the boundaries of prejudice. I, in turn, was able to share this openness when I returned to my country after the war.

Today, I work in the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Vatican, assisting the local churches in the Middle-East. *Through the meticulous work of personal conversion and of transforming reality,* I had to forgive and heal in order to fulfil my mission as Regional Coordinator. The human kindness I received then, played a major part in helping me heal and understand fraternity.

B*ecause the future starts today and begins with each of us,* I am grateful that providence has found a way for me to use my experience as a migrant to help build the future of other migrants and refugees, *so that God’s plan for the world may be realised and his Kingdom of justice, fraternity, and peace may come.*

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