

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE 3rd WORLD MEETING OF POPULAR MOVEMENTS**
Paul VI Audience Hall

5 November 2016

[Link](#)

[...] I know that you devoted a whole day to the drama of migrants, refugees and displaced persons. What are we to do in the face of this tragedy? In the dicastery Cardinal Turkson heads, there is a department concerned with those situations. I decided that, at least for the time being, that department would be directly under the Pope, because here we have a shameful situation that can only be described by a word that came spontaneously to my lips in Lampedusa: a disgrace. [...]

I echo the words of my brother, Archbishop Ieronymos of Greece: "Anyone who looks into the eyes of those small children we met in the refugee camps can immediately recognize, in its entirety, the 'bankruptcy' of humanity" (Address in the Moria Refugee Camp, Lesbos, 16 April 2016). What is going on in the world today that, when a bank fails, scandalous sums of money suddenly appear to save it, but before this bankruptcy of humanity not even a thousandth part is allotted to save those brothers and sisters who suffer so greatly? The Mediterranean has turned into a cemetery, and not only the Mediterranean... there are so many cemeteries alongside the walls, walls drenched in innocent blood. During the days of this Meeting, I asked in the video: How many people have died in the Mediterranean?

Fear hardens the heart and turns into a callousness that is blind to the blood, the pain, the faces of other people. As my brother, Patriarch Bartholomew, has said: "Those who are afraid of you have not looked you in the eye. Those who are afraid of you have not seen your faces. Those who are afraid of you do not see your children. They forget that dignity and freedom transcend fear and division. They forget that migration is not an issue for the Middle East and Northern Africa, for Europe and Greece. It is an issue for the world" (Address in the Moria Refugee Camp, Lesbos, 16 April 2016).

To be sure, it is a problem for the world. No one should be forced to flee from his or her country, but the evil is doubled when, in these terrible circumstances, migrants fall into the clutches of human traffickers in order to cross borders. It is tripled if, arriving in a land where they hoped to have a better future, they are treated with contempt, exploited and even enslaved. This can be seen on any corner in hundreds of cities. Or else, they simply are not allowed to enter. [...]

I ask you to do everything you can. Never forget that Jesus, Mary and Joseph also experienced the dramatic plight of refugees. I ask you to show that special solidarity that exists between people who have suffered. You have shown that you can rescue factories from bankruptcy, recycle other people's refuse, create jobs, work the land, build housing, integrate segregated barrios and tirelessly plead, like the widow in the Gospel, for justice (cf. *Lk* 18:1-8). Perhaps by your example and your persistence, some states and international agencies may open their eyes and

take suitable measures to receive and fully integrate all those who for one reason or another seek refuge far from home. And to confront the deeper reasons why thousands of men, women and children are daily driven from their native land. [...]