

DATE: January 3, 2008

FROM: Mar Muñoz-Visoso

O: 202-541-3202

M: 301-646-8616

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

‘FROM MANY, ONE FAMILY OF GOD,’ HERALDS NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK, JANUARY 6-12

WASHINGTON – ‘From Many, One Family of God’ is the theme for this year’s National Migration Week, sponsored by Migration and Refugee Services of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB/MRS), and to be observed January 6-12. These words are accompanied by an image from the Gospel of Mark of Jesus feeding the crowds with multiplied loaves and the fishes. The message is one of assurance of the providence of God as well as a reminder that His abundance is meant to be shared with all people. This year’s celebration marks the 27th annual National Migration Week observance.

Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City, new chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, said that this year’s theme “reminds us that though we come from many cultures and places, we are all part of one human family and members of the one Body of Christ. Sadly, rather than embracing newcomers to our land whose circumstances have compelled them to seek new lives among us, we too often respond in fear and harbor attitudes of resentment and suspicion.”

“The miracle of the loaves and fishes is God’s promise not only to the disciples but to us as well. If we fail to minister to the needs of these newcomers, we fail our Lord himself,” Bishop Wester said. “National Migration Week 2008 is a celebration of the diversity and richness of the family of God...When we set aside our concerns and share our resources, God’s blessings extend to all of us.”

After failure by the U.S. Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform last summer, the Catholic Bishops have vowed to continue raising their “prophetic voice calling the faithful and all people of goodwill to reach out in love and understanding to our migrant brothers

and sisters. We must learn of the realities that cause them to leave all that is precious behind for an uncertain future, learn the truth about the many contributions they make and gifts they bring to our society, and work to reform our immigration laws that cause family disintegration and strife within communities,” the bishops say.

The Migration and Refugee Services of the USCCB has made several materials available to facilitate the observance of National Migration Week 2008. These materials include a prayer for migrants and refugees, bulletin inserts explaining the meaning and purpose of the celebration, a bilingual poster and a calendar for reflection for each day during the week of observance. Each day is devoted to one particular topic and contains a Scripture passage and suggestions for action.

Information and materials for National Migration Week 2008 can be found at www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.shtml.

#####

08-002
SEC,DD,CNS,RNS,Crux