

On the Occasion of the 2026 World Day of Refugees, Migrants and People on the Move

**Catholic Committee of Japan for Life, Peace and Human Rights
Chairperson: Bishop Shinzo Moriyama**

The theme for this year's World Day of Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move is, "Even just one of these children." Pope Leo XIV chose this theme based on Jesus's words in the Gospel of Matthew: "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Mt 18:5). This title embodies the Church's fervent desire to cherish and uphold the dignity of every child involved in migration.

The Holy Father says, "The Gospel, with the words 'even just one,' asks us not to count. This is not a matter of statistics or numbers. Through children, we can welcome the Lord and encounter him." He thus reminds us that protecting the dignity of children means encountering the Lord Jesus. In the time of Jesus, the human dignity and fundamental rights of children were not recognized. But in today's world as well, the situations threatening children's rights and dignity cannot be said to have improved at all. The reality of this situation demands an urgent and effective response from us.

In a world plagued by endless wars and frequent large-scale disasters driven by climate change, it is the children who suffer the consequences first. Let us respond to the Pope's call by journeying together to create a society that supports the most vulnerable and protects their lives.