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The child of a Venezuelan migrant peers from a tent at an encampment set up by migrants in a park near the main bus terminal in Bogotá, Colombia, June 3, 2020. Staff layoffs following the Trump administration's freeze on foreign aid in early 2025 have hit hardest so far in Colombia, where Jesuit Refugee Service assists Venezuelan refugees and others in accessing asylum to stay in that country. (AP/Fernando Vergara)



Justin McLellan

Vatican Correspondent

View Author Profile

jmclellan@ncronline.org
Follow on Twitter at @m/McLellan_Js

Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis urged Christians to examine their consciences in Lent by comparing their daily lives to the hardships faced by migrants, calling it a way to grow in empathy and discover God's call to compassion.

"It would be a good Lenten exercise for us to compare our daily life with that of some migrant or foreigner, to learn how to sympathize with their experiences and in this way discover what God is asking of us so that we can better advance on our journey to the house of the Father," the pope wrote in his message for Lent 2025.

The message, signed Feb. 6, before the pope was hospitalized Feb. 14 for treatment of double pneumonia, was released by the Vatican Feb. 25.

Reflecting on the theme "Let us journey together in hope," the pope said that Lent is a time to confront both personal and collective struggles with faith and compassion.

Comparing the Lenten journey to the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt, he recalled "our brothers and sisters who in our own day are fleeing situations of misery and violence in search of a better life for themselves and their loved ones."

"A first call to conversion thus comes from the realization that all of us are pilgrims in this life," he wrote. "Am I really on a journey, or am I standing still, not moving,

either immobilized by fear and hopelessness or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone?"

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Francis also emphasized the importance of journeying together, saying Christians are called to walk "side by side, without shoving or stepping on others, without envy or hypocrisy, without letting anyone be left behind or excluded."

Christians, he said, should reflect on whether they are open to others or focused only on their own needs.

The pope called on Christians to journey together in hope toward Easter, living out the central message of the Jubilee Year: "Hope does not disappoint."

Another Lenten call to conversion, he said, is to embrace hope and trust in God's promise of eternal life, made possible through Christ's resurrection.

Francis encouraged Christians to consider whether they truly live in a way that reflects hope, trusting in God's promise of eternal life, seeking forgiveness and committing themselves to justice, fraternity and care for creation.

"Christ," he wrote, "lives and reigns in glory. Death has been transformed into triumph, and the faith and great hope of Christians rests in this: the resurrection of Christ!"

This story appears in the **Lent 2025** feature series. View the full series.