



Migrant Workers

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Our Mandate

To provide support and resources to parish and deanery outreach initiatives to migrant workers who are our parishioners in the Diocese of London; to collaborate with community groups in reaching workers who are not part of our parish communities; to engage in research; lobbying and education that raises awareness of systemic issues of migration and facilitates better care and concern for the estimated 20,000 migrant workers in our diocese.

Our Work (2009-2010)

Extended the care and concern of the church through parish-based outreach in Leamington, Kingsville, Oxley, Pelee Island, Exeter, Bothwell/Thamesville, Blenheim and all of Ingersoll Deanery. Offered sacramental and pastoral care to Catholic migrant workers, including Mass in Spanish at eight locations. After mass socials and cultural gatherings such as Mexican Independence Day celebrations. While still mainly a rural outreach, we are beginning to assist workers employed in urban, non-agricultural work. While engaged primarily with Hispanic outreach, Thai and Filipino migrant workers receive some outreach through community partnerships. Individual parish outreach sites provide services as diverse as Hispanic AA groups, bicycle safety programs, transportation services, on-farm prayer groups, translation services, ESL classes, informational fairs and more. We also engage in education, advocacy and lobbying to address gaps in programs and services that put workers at risk as well as with a community coalition at Chatham-Kent to educate government representatives on migrant issues. The ministry also includes community partnerships with employers, other faiths and community service agencies that provide additional services or us with organizing outreach events.

Our Good News Stories

A visiting worker from Barbados recently became stranded in London after a catastrophic illness prevented his return home. Tied to weekly treatments at a London hospital, his work visa, and health coverage had lapsed, and he had no way to pay for his treatments or even food. Once alerted to the workers' predicament, we were able to mobilize assistance from the local parish and wider community. A Barbadian immigrant from the local parish visited and reassured the man, and the local St. Vincent de Paul offered assistance while representatives of the farming community worked with authorities to plan for medical treatment that would allow the worker's return home.

In evaluating a pilot project in Thamesville, a Mexican worker who had been coming to the community for over eight years was asked "What has having a prayer team come to the farm meant to you? Does it make any difference to your life?" The worker replied: "In the eight years that I've been coming here, this is the first time I've felt welcomed. I feel people really want me here (attending the local church)."

At the recent Thai Songkran festival, a worker who had benefitted from Migrant Workers Ministry's sponsorship of Thai Outreach ESL work, beamed proudly as he was able, for the first time, to speak to us fluently in English. "Thank you for welcoming us here in your beautiful country and for caring about us."

Publications:

- [Pamphlet \(printable\) on Migrant Workers Ministry](#)
- [A Snapshot in Time:2010 Report, Executive Summary](#)
- [A Snapshot in Time: 2010 Report - Part I Current Realities](#)
- [A Snapshot in Time: 2010 Report - Part 2 Evaluating Programs and Future Needs](#)
- [A Snapshot in Time: 2010 Report - Part 3 Recommendations and Conclusion](#)

Links:

- [Pontifical Council on Migration Documents and Statements](#)
- [El Sambrador \(Migrant Workers' Outreach in Bradford\)](#)

