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#PathsOfHospitality

Hope  
is the  
Path

# PATHS OF HOSPITALITY

*A retreat to walk  
with hope*



# PATHS OF HOSPITALITY

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## PATHS OF HOSPITALITY

### A RETREAT TO WALK WITH HOPE

There are many paths that migrants and refugees continue to be forced to take. Situations of violence and armed conflict; impoverishment and inequality; lack of access to livelihood resources; and climate change are forcing 120 million people to move around the world. Of these, more than 37 million are refugees in countries other than their country of origin.

Migration has become a crossroads of history, bringing diversity, creativity and richness to our societies. However, it is also becoming in some contexts a scapegoat for social ills.

Europe is facing a key period with the adoption of a Migration and Asylum Pact that puts human rights at the external borders at risk. In other regions of North, Central and South America, barriers and walls are being erected to prevent human beings fleeing horror from building a life project.

Through #PathsOfHospitality we want to create a future with hope.

For the Society of Jesus, forced migration has been a global priority of our apostolic work for decades.

Within the diverse responses and approaches, Hospitality has emerged and been recognised as a central and cross-cutting factor, not only with regard to Jesuit action, but particularly when it comes to the interaction between migrants and transit communities and destinations.

In this retreat, I am going to invite you to pray with this virtue that is deeply rooted in our Christian tradition: **hospitality**. An invitation through three steps: **gratitude, vulnerability and encounter**.

But before we continue on our journey in this retreat, I propose that we take a breath to become aware of this important encounter with the Lord and with so many people who are on the road today in so many places around the world.



We begin this retreat with this prayer “In your presence”, placing ourselves in the presence of the Lord, and we will listen to Psalm 139, followed by a time of silence and reflection and conclude with the song “Here, I am Lord”, which we can sing together.

## Opening Prayer

### In your presence

Here I am Lord,

I come to seek you once more,  
in the certainty that you are at my side,  
You carry me, accompany me and sustain me.

Here I am Lord with all that I am,  
just as I am at this very moment,  
and in this vital context  
of difficulty or plenitude,  
of darkness or of joy,  
of serenity or inner struggle.

So I am Lord,  
here I am,  
and so I stand before you and with you.

## Psalm 139

O LORD, You have searched me  
and known me.

<sup>2</sup>You know when I sit down and when I  
get up;

You understand my thought from far  
off.

<sup>3</sup>You search my path and my lying  
down  
and are aware of all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>For there is not a word on my tongue,  
but behold, O LORD, You know it fully.

<sup>5</sup>You put Yourself behind and before  
me,  
and keep Your hand on me.

<sup>6</sup>Such knowledge is too wonderful for  
me;  
it is lofty, and I cannot fathom it.

<sup>7</sup>Where shall I go from Your spirit,  
or where shall I flee from Your  
presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I ascend to heaven, You are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, You are  
there.

<sup>9</sup>If I take the wings of the morning  
and dwell at the end of the sea,

<sup>10</sup>even there Your hand shall guide me,  
and Your right hand shall take hold of  
me.

<sup>11</sup>If I say, "Surely the darkness shall  
cover me,  
and the light shall be as night about  
me,"

<sup>12</sup>even the darkness is not dark to You,  
but the night shines as the day,  
for the darkness is like light to You.

<sup>13</sup>You brought my inner parts into  
being;

You wove me in my mother's womb.

<sup>14</sup>I will praise you, for You made me  
with fear and wonder;  
marvelous are Your works,  
and You know me completely.

<sup>15</sup>My frame was not hidden from You  
when I was made in secret,  
and intricately put together in the  
lowest parts of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw me unformed,  
yet in Your book

all my days were written,  
before any of them came into being.

<sup>17</sup>How precious also are Your thoughts  
to me, O God!

How great is the sum of them!

<sup>18</sup>If I should count them,  
they are more in number than the  
sand;

when I awake,

I am still with You.



## **SONG: Here I Am Lord**

### **Here I Am Lord**

<https://youtu.be/Z4ATBa17ycY>

I, the Lord of sea and sky  
I have heard my people cry  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save  
I have made the stars of night  
I will make their darkness bright  
Who will bear my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart

I, the Lord of wind and flame  
I will tend the poor and lame  
I will set a feast for them  
My hand will save  
Finest bread I will provide  
'Til their hearts be satisfied  
I will give my life to them  
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord  
Is it I, Lord?  
I have heard You calling in the night  
I will go, Lord  
If You lead me  
I will hold Your people in my heart  
I will hold Your people in my heart

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GRATITUDE

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# GRATITUDE

*"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16)*

Take a moment to **breathe** and become aware of **God's gaze of love upon you...**

No matter how you might be feeling in this moment, **pause** to remember.  
that God has created you,  
that God cares for you,  
that you were created from love, and for love...

Ask God to speak to you during this time of prayer..

How am I feeling at the end of this working week?

What do I want to present to the Lord in this retreat with my community?

I invite you to have a quiet time with the Lord this afternoon to give thanks, to be at his side, to let go of so many noises, tasks and worries.

Allow the Lord, in the midst of so much activity, to have a special place in your life and in your heart to have **a true encounter with him.**

Present to the Lord those people or situations that you would like to bring to the Lord so that He may welcome, comfort, and strengthen them.

## **Book of Ruth: Where you go I will go.**

I invite you to carefully read the book of **Ruth**, the example of a deep gratitude, which springs from so much good received, in the midst of nonsense and difficulties. A true example of faithfulness and thankfulness.

A **foreigner** welcomed in Israel, who because of her faith, receives God's blessing, and becomes one of the "mothers" of the people of Israel.

Without a doubt, the Moabite Ruth is an improbable and unexpected hero in an Israelite tale. It is reasonable to assume that the well-known King David came from a wealthy and pure Israelite family. We would laugh at the idea that a foreign woman would carry on the royal dynasty if we were ancient Israelites.

We would never anticipate that King David's great-grandmother would be of low-class Moabite descent, but that is exactly what she is.

Why then did God pick Ruth? Why did He make an impoverished foreigner King David's great-grandmother? Why does He pick a humble lady to be the improbable hero of Israel and to have a significant role in its history?

The reason is that God show through Ruth how He is. He teaches us that the weak, the humble and the lowly are the most important in His kingdom.

Today Ruth's story resonates in our lives too. So many migrants, so many women, live out of gratitude and bring us blessing in our sometimes closed and paralysed societies.

This day comes with an invitation to be at the Lord's side, in whatever way you feel most helpful.

**The initiative comes from God.**

What **light** does Ruth's story bring to my life?

Do I really believe that the weak, the humble can truly **transform the world?**  
And my life?

Take some time to reflect on the lives of so many migrants, companions along the way, and **all the good** that they have brought to your life, and to the world around you in your neighbourhood and city.

Finally, speak with God as one friend speaks to another about what you would like **to thank** Him in this moment you are living.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

## Thank You

Thank you in every step of the way.  
Thank you for being by my side when I isolate myself.  
Thank you for accepting me and loving me when I screw up and get upset.  
Thank you for trusting me.  
Thank you for being a part of my life.

Thank you for answering my calls.  
Thank you for opening the door for me.  
Thank you for forgiving my silences.  
Thank you for looking kindly on my mistakes.  
Thank you for loving me as I am.

Thank you for welcoming my weakness.  
Thank you for helping me to grow.  
Thank you for contrasting me to get me back on track.  
Thank you for being a companion on the way.  
Thank you for welcoming me without questions.

Thank you for embracing my fragility.  
Thank you for accepting my miseries.  
Thank you for helping me to be grateful.  
Thank you for encouraging my new projects.  
Thank you for sustaining me in solitude.

Thank you for the day to day.  
Thank you for the small things.  
Thank you for welcoming my tears and sometimes making me cry.  
Thank you for laughing together.  
Thank you for making me a part of your life.

Thank you for living hope together.  
Thank you for helping me not to give up, not to be discouraged.  
Thank you for rejoicing with me.

**Thank you, always thank you.**



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VULNERABILITY

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# VULNERABILITY

## "There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in"

Hospitality is rooted in one of the oldest dynamics of humanity: to welcome and to be welcomed, especially in the context of nomadism, pilgrimage, and relations between peoples and families.

A common gateway to such hospitality is the vulnerability inherent in life, inherent in human beings, and a dynamic of reciprocity: "Today for you, tomorrow for me".

Although vulnerability is inherent to human beings, in our contexts, both death, which remains a taboo, and failure and suffering, something weak that should not be shown, seem to be neutralised by fireworks and the success of showcase in our social networks.

The coronavirus pandemic seemed to have awakened us from this unreal dream, but we are not sure we have learned so much.

What seems clear is that our Christian tradition presents to us in the Bible and in Church History, through so many scenes and characters, that our vulnerability is a gateway to the "light", as Leonard Cohen's lyrics reminded us, "There's a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in".

## Vulnerability as a Gateway to Hospitality

"Hospitality is presented as a human and spiritually vital value and connected to the vulnerability of the human being who always requires being welcomed and welcoming the other, who always needs to create inhabitable spaces and leave inhospitable contexts" (Boné, 2008: 110).

The practice of hospitality within the Social Doctrine of the Church unmasks a rhetoric of hostility, in many cases classist, with nativist language.

Catholic Social Teaching is rooted in the common good and dignity of all human beings created in the image and likeness of God, as well as in the interdependence and interconnectedness of all humanity. The magisterial teaching document, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, presents migrants as co-creators of a universal brotherhood and presents hospitality and migrations as elements intrinsic to the nature of the Church. Hospitality represents a way of living the mission of every Christian, with a pilgrim's vocation to journey to the Father's house.

Hospitality was firstly a way of survival, which presented an element of reciprocity and the possibility of encountering God through a stranger. Hospitality is rooted in a theology of grace

and of giving freely and evokes our own vulnerability and the common memory of having been foreigners in a strange land, descendants of a wandering Aramean.

Quite often, hostility is anchored in our own sin which leads us to accumulate more things, to live for the sake of appearances and turns us into arrogant people. From this reality, the fear of losing privileges, wrapped in the dynamics of exclusion and marginality, unmasks the importance of radical hospitality.

A radical hospitality reminds us that God is a welcoming acceptance, as we recall our own vulnerability, as a pilgrim people who establish themselves through pivotal exile experiences. The Lord of Glory shows his wounds (Jn. 20: 25). God writes the history of salvation through his frailty, through human frailty. "I have heard the cry of my people, says the Lord." (Ex. 3:7) Through his frailty, he sought us.

Hospitality invites us not to be afraid of the fragility that we experience in our world, because it is through our vulnerabilities that God is present to us. "By his wounds you have been healed" (1Pt 2: 24). Through vulnerability, there is only dialogue between those who are wounded.

Grace is, therefore, central in the practice of hospitality, as well as in an economy of blessings, of abundance that overflows any encounter. We are all recipients of God's blessings, and hospitality is founded on those blessings or abundance.

The transformational power of hospitality redirects our lives towards service and brings us closer to the road and to the margins where God goes out to meet our migrant brothers and sisters. That transforming power of hospitality opens doors, springs open locks and encourages us to build bridges.

A biblical scene that can help us illustrate this dynamic is Jesus' encounter with Martha and Mary. The practice of hospitality that starts from a state of vulnerability and needs attention and care.

## **Martha and Mary: Hospitality Invites Us to Care for Others (Lk 10: 38-42)**

*Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her. (Lk 10: 41-42)*

In the practice of hospitality, it is important to keep in mind service to people, as well as accompaniment and listening. Both attitudes are vital in any welcome and coexistence. What happens many times, with our frenetic rhythms, is that we look for what is effective, short-term and measurable.

Martha goes out of her way to serve Jesus, doing many things in order to have everything ready. Everyday chores keep her busy, engrossed. However, Mary accompanies Jesus, dedicates time to listening, to just being by his side.

In our daily life it is very important to create listening spaces, to spend time and to share life together; free and open spaces in which we spend time with each other, growing together and sharing life.

Obviously, we are not comparing an attitude of service with an attitude of accompaniment and listening. Both are important, but Jesus reminds us of a very important element in the practice of hospitality which, especially these days, we need to protect.

I invite you to take time to remember gratefully the many **experiences** of God's grace in your life in times of vulnerability.

Also, remember the times when you have been a **source of blessing** to others through your hospitality and care.

If it helps you, go through a passage in the Bible, such as that of Martha and Mary, to rediscover how **Jesus** is welcoming and hospitable to others; how he celebrates, with whom he sits at table, whom he invites to eat, or whom he welcomes with care and affection.

And of all this, what resonates most in my life? **What moves me?**

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ENCOUNTER





## ENCOUNTER

### Emmaus: A life-changing encounter on the road

**Luke 24:13-35** | When he was seated at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

### A reflection from the people who are on the road

Like the disciples of Emmaus, many people all over the world **leave their homes** for various reasons. The Emmaus disciples fled in grief after seeing Jesus killed, in the midst of a crisis of life and faith. Many migrants are forced to leave their homes because of pressure, violence or conflict, whether personal, social, economic or ecological.

**Transit** for those in Emmaus and for people who either voluntarily or involuntarily migrate, is often a real ordeal due to complex and bureaucratic legal processes. The situation is even more complicated for those who are forced to leave their homes due to conflict and life-threatening conditions. Jesus tries to do with the disciples of Emmaus, it is very important to create safe spaces and pathways in which migrants are able to reframe and rework these memories.

Jesus takes **welcome and hospitality** seriously. On the one hand, he takes the initiative and on the other hand he allows himself to be welcomed. Hospitality is a two-way street. Migrants generally do not have as many opportunities to experience hospitality when they arrive in the host country.

It is from that safe space, from that new narrative, seated at the table, through the shared bread, that the disciples recognise Jesus, and find meaning in their lives. It is the moment where true resurrection takes place, where we recognise that we live in the world, which is our common home.

### Ignatius the pilgrim

Like the Trinity, we look at the world and see great diversity, broken people weeping, spaces of hostility, but also hopeful and joyful people. People who are forced to leave their homes because of war or violence, famine,... feel how their life project is broken. In a similar way, the wound that Ignacio suffers in Pamplona is a rupture in what was his life project, something like what happens to those at Emmaus and so many people on the move. A brutal crisis that brings

with it an opportunity. Ignatius dedicates time to silence and listening. This setting out on the road, this important encounter with the Lord, and then with others, this openness to the light and a rediscovery of the mission, made possible different stages of conversion and discernment.

I invite you to **enter the scene**, to contemplate the passage *Emmaus* together with Ignatius and so many people who are out on the road; to look at the people, to listen to what they say, to observe their gestures and attitudes.

Be grateful for those **encounters** that in one way or another have changed your life, and perhaps also for the people who have brought them about, through whom you have experienced hospitality.

**Let these questions resonate in you** during this time of prayer:

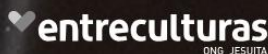
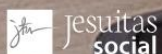
***How does “Emmaus” (Luke 24:13-35) resonate with me and the conversion of Ignatius?***  
***What is this new narrative of my life to which I am invited?***  
***What do you call me to do?***  
***Where do I feel that God is present through the ‘breaking of bread’?***  
***Looking at my mission, where am I, and what new opportunities lie ahead?***

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Questions  
for dialogue

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## Questions for dialogue

What resonated in you? What worries you? What enriched your thinking and brought consolation to your soul? What are the highlights that struck you concerning our mission? What do you want to keep?

### Some questions to explore further

- What is the central idea or afterthought that remains with you after this time of discussion?
- Where do you find yourself with regard to these great challenges, social, community, ecclesial? Are you disengaged, involved, moved...?
- What does hospitality mean today in my team, in my community, in my life, in my immediate context?
- In which situations do we feel called to build bridges and in which to break down walls? Where do we feel called to be more welcoming and hospitable?
- What dimensions of gratitude, vulnerability and encounter have helped you most in this retreat? What do you feel called to?

At the end of this retreat, thank God for his presence and ask him to live this journey with hope, because hope is the path.

### The path is made by walking

At the end of this retreat, I invite you to help us to keep walking, joining forces globally to walk for hospitality and hope.

A big family in the world invites you to follow the way with hope. Because...

**Hope is the path.**

If you want to know more about this initiative in the world visit:

<https://www.hospitalidad.es/caminosdehospitalidad/eng/>

**Alberto Ares, SJ**  
**JRS Europe**



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