

# October 2025

## Archdeacon Matthew writes...

Media reports link the recent increase in national flag displays to concerns about UK migration levels. I understand that migration is a genuine concern for many, including Christians, and I don't wish to dismiss these anxieties. It's important to acknowledge that our church communities include first, second and third generation migrants. For Christians seeking to faithfully follow Jesus, reflecting His holiness and partnering in extending God's Kingdom on earth, the migration debate often overlooks a crucial question: human dignity. In this month's article, I want to explore how we can balance concerns over UK migration levels with thinking, speaking, and acting in ways that prioritise human dignity.

When addressing such a topical political issue, I recognise that blanket terms like "migration" or "immigration" are problematic. These terms are too broad to properly distinguish between those entering the country by established routes to fill skill shortages, those seeking asylum, and those entering via improvised means. I understand that much of the concern expressed through protests and flag displays relates specifically to the latter. Another challenge of terms such as migrant, 'illegal' immigrant, or asylum seeker is the labelling of an individual by their documented or undocumented status. This risks reducing the fullness of a person's identity, character and life story to a single label, and an often weaponised label too.

Applying our Christian faith to current issues, injustices, and inequalities is central to following Jesus. Our deep faith traditions inspire us to act with consideration for others, especially the vulnerable, poor, and marginalised. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, 'Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls' (Jeremiah 6:16). Our faith in Jesus, the Good News of the Gospel, and the biblical vision of God's Kingdom penetrating our daily lives offers an antidote to the indignity some groups face in our society. I'm making not a political argument but a theological one: while there are legitimate concerns about migration and the perceived pressure on local communities, our Christian faith calls us to think, speak and act in ways that uphold the dignity of others.

Our faith's approach to speaking of migrants with dignity begins in Genesis, where we learn that all creation is made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). Migrants possess inherent worth and dignity not because of our political ideologies or personal opinions, but because



they, like all humanity, are made in God's image. The Bible clearly connects our innate dignity and worth with justice. Proverbs 31:8-9 instructs us, 'Open your mouth for those with no voice, for the cause of all the dispossessed. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the poor and needy.' Ultimately, we find our dignity in Jesus. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Galatians 3:28 that social and cultural differences do not separate us from our unity in Christ and our common dignity in Him.

Those deeply concerned about migration levels often worry about preserving what they see as solid foundations in society. The underlying suggestion is that high migration levels threaten our British way of life. Before our current debates, the late Pope Benedict suggested that society's solid foundations depend on affirming human dignity:

*A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalised.*

Across our churches, chaplaincies and fresh expressions in the Diocese of Derby, our vocation must be to promote the innate dignity and self-worth of all people made in God's image. This doesn't mean ignoring genuine concerns about migration, but it does mean that how we articulate those concerns matters. Christians are called to point people to Jesus, in whom we discover our common humanity, and to reflect our own dignity in how we welcome others and pray for justice for everyone on earth.

Bless all who seek refuge on this earth.  
Meet their needs for safety and for home.  
Move the hearts of your people to show them welcome.  
Cause wars to cease and bring justice,  
to the nations that no one will need to flee again.  
Amen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Trick'.

**The Venerable Matthew Trick**  
Archdeacon of Derby City and South Derbyshire