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Serving People *on the Move*

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Stan ended up working in South Africa, and his brothers and sisters from the Democratic Republic of the Congo where he worked previously, find him there at their service. Pat worked for years in Brazil and now finds himself at the service of his Brazilian brothers and sisters in Ireland. A Vietnamese confrere comes to the aid of fellow Vietnamese in the United States of America. We can marvel at the mysterious ways divine providence works as God looks after his people.

The story of Joseph in Egypt is interesting in that although the Israelites appeared in Egypt because of hard times and stayed there a long time, it never became home. Today when we see the people of north-west Africa undertaking dangerous journeys to reach Europe, or Mexicans trying to get by the wall into the United States, we have to wonder: what if their country could acquire better conditions and be home for them again. The present anxiety about climate change and its impact on the habitats of the poorest people of the planet who have made the smallest contribution to global warming and have often no choice except to move out and go elsewhere, demonstrates that the challenge of making home a better home to go back to is great indeed. It is one thing to be an economic

exile and another to be a political asylum seeker.

During my time in Mozambique I asked myself every day, "What is the main task in this country, for the country, the church, for the Spiritans and for me?" The usual answer seemed to be the fight against poverty. It sounds vague and general but as a strategic target it is very good. When you know

spiritual needs of these people. And in all our work with and for such people it would be strange if we Spiritans neglected our own spiritual dimension. Of course we have to be open to people of all faiths or no faith and offer equal respect and love to all.

As part of our deep respect for people, who have not always enjoyed respect for their human dignity, we need to keep in

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what your war is against you can more easily evaluate each battle and every effort as part of the solution or part of the problem. It is important for the people we minister to that we know what we are doing and have some clear ideas about how to do it.

Refugees and asylum seekers are people with a wide variety of needs, all important, but some more immediately urgent, such as food, security and shelter. Once people's most basic material needs are met other areas need to be addressed such as the psychological and social wellbeing of individuals and groups. It would be strange indeed if we Spiritans ignored or neglected the

mind that most often as Spiritans we are dealing with profoundly religious people from Africa and Latin America. We would be lacking in respect for them if we were to neglect their faith dimension.

We need to pay attention to our own needs arising from the ministry we are involved in. As we work with people who are afflicted we may ourselves become afflicted. While this sometimes requires therapy similar to that required by the people we assist, we also need to have a strong spirituality of this ministry as a bedrock for our own motivation. Our spirituality is an essential dimension of our ministry. ■

