

Make Immigration Reform Your Lenten Promise

Justice for Immigrants Toolkit

Thank you for your faith commitment to make immigration reform your priority this Lent.

Inside this packet, you will find weekly resources to accompany you through your Lenten journey. The resources are designed to help you reflect on the biblical call for immigration reform, and act to impact our current political reality.

To help you along the way, there are four pieces that could be most helpful to you:

A Lenten Calendar

With a little extra prayer and encouragement, we believe we can change the hearts and minds of Catholic members of Congress to support immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship and protects family unity. Catholics across the country will generate a groundswell of prayer and action directed toward a Catholic member of Congress each weekday. Your individual part of this movement will be to say a short prayer for the selected member of Congress and then pick up the phone to share your prayer. (You could even read the person who answers the phone one of the pieces included in that week's theme). [Download the standalone calendar.](#)

A Toolkit of Lenten Immigration Resources

The information in the following pages will provide you with stories, scripture readings, prayers, and reflection questions for your own personal use or to share with a group.

NETWORK's email series

Sign up at www.networklobby.org/immigrationlentenpromise to receive weekly emails that will walk you through each week's theme.

Social Media Tools

Sign up each week for our one-time Twitter and Facebook post scheduler. Visit www.networklobby.org/immigrationlentenpromise each week for the link!

Information about the Fast for Families

The Fast for Families: A Call for Immigration Reform & Citizenship began with a tent stationed on the National Mall, in the shadow of the Capitol building. For one month, people of faith from across the country joined core fasters in prayer, fasting, and solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers to call on Congress to pass immigration reform with a path to citizenship. Starting February 24, the Fast for Families took to the road to travel across the country to amplify the call. We encourage you to visit www.fast4families.org to see if they will be coming to a town near you.

We tried wherever possible to line up the Catholic members of Congress with the Fast for Families tour schedule. Also, join us each Wednesday during Lent in a solidarity fast with all the supporters of Fast for Families. [Read more about the faith call to fasting.](#)

The Fast for Families Fasters' Declaration:

Fast for Citizenship: The Moral Obligation to Pass Immigration Reform

What is our faith, our words and our history worth if not translated into action, sacrifice and redemption? The world has witnessed the beliefs and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez translate in courageous acts of civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance to gain justice for a community of people who were underserved and discriminated against. We now humbly attempt to follow the examples of these great teachers and the teachings of Scripture to align our own hearts with the heart of God, who desires justice for immigrants and immediate justice for the 11 million undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters within our borders. Our faith requires nothing less. **Today begins our vow to abstain from sustenance.**



Where Cesar Chavez ended his 36 day fast for the rights of farm workers in 1988, we continue decades later to sacrifice our own comfort to underscore the moral crisis afflicting workers, children, mothers and fathers, living under an immigration system unwilling to recognize their existence and the legitimacy of their familial ties with integrity and empathy.

We have heard the word “wait” in the past. Dr. King heard it. Chavez heard it. Gandhi heard it. Our communities of immigrants continue to hear it while they bear witness to families divided by deportations, students trapped in limbo bearing the weight of anxiety beyond their years, and workers brutally exploited and relegated to invisibility.

Yet like them, we refuse to dwell on the frustrations of “wait.” We rise with them and declare our moral obligation, grounded in the words of God spoken through the prophets, to move the compassion of elected leadership in the House, and to inspire a resilient movement to cease the deportations, suffering, sorrow and fear and usher a new structure of laws for the good of our country men and women and the sake of our values.

Our voluntary sacrifice represents the urgency, the passion and commitment of a community of all religions, races, and political affiliations, to enact commonsense immigration reform this year.

On this day, we begin our journey. We will fast and pray until the bonds of families are no longer broken. We will fast and pray until immigration reform is no longer a notion, but a reality. We will fast and pray until citizenship is no longer a dream for 11 million aspiring Americans.

Make Immigration Reform Your Lenten Promise

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

MARCH			5 Ash Wednesday  R-OH-8  Speaker John Boehner (202) 225-6205	6 R-WA-4  Rep. Doc Hastings (202) 225-5816	7 D-NY-1  Rep. Timothy Bishop (202) 225-3826	8  
9  Matthew 25:31-40	10 R-NY-22  Rep. Richard Hanna (202) 225-3665	11 D-OR-4  Rep. Peter DeFazio (202) 225-6416	12  R-OH-1  Rep. Steve Chabot (202) 225-2216	13 R-NY-27  Rep. Chris Collins (202) 225-5265	14 R-CA-8  Rep. Paul Cook (202) 225-5861	15  
16  Ruth 1	17 R-PA-8  Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (202) 225-4276	18 R-WI-1  Rep. Paul Ryan (202) 225-3031	19  R-IL-13  Rep. Rodney Davis (202) 225-2371	20 R-FL-17  Rep. Tom Rooney 202-225-5792	21 D-MA-9  Rep. William Keating (202) 225-3111	22  
23  Isaiah 1:13-17	24 D-MA-8  Rep. Stephen Lynch (202) 225-8273	25 R-IN-5  Rep. Susan Brooks (202) 225-2276	26  R-TX-10  Rep. Michael McCaul (202) 225-2401	27 R-MI-4  Rep. Dave Camp (202) 225-3561	28 R-OH-12  Rep. Pat Tiberi (202) 225-5355	29  
30  Matthew 18:1-5	31 R-OH-14  Rep. David Joyce (202) 225-5731	1	2	3	4	5  

Look for the schedule for the rest of Lent on our April Calendar



Read Our Weekly Reflection
Each Sunday



Post on Social Media
visit www.networklobby.org/ImmigrationLentenPromise
for an easy post scheduler



Call Congress &
Share Your Prayer



Day of Fasting
With Fast 4 Families



we are one family under God!



www.networklobby.org/ImmigrationLentenPromise

Make Immigration Reform Your Lenten Promise

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

APRIL		1 D-AZ-1 Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (202) 225-3361	2 R-PA-7 Rep. Patrick Meehan (202) 225-2401	3 R-NY-11 Rep. Michael Grimm (202) 225-3371	4 R-NY-2 Rep. Peter King (202) 225-7896	5
6 Exodus 22:21-23	7 R-NJ-4 Rep. Chris Smith (202) 225-3765	8 R-NJ-2 Rep. Frank LoBiondo (202) 225-6572	9 R-WI-07 Rep. Sean Duffy (202) 225-3365	10 D-IL-3 Rep. Dan Lipinski (202) 225-5701	11 R-MI-1 Rep. Dan Benishek (202) 225-4735	12
13 Palm Sunday Leviticus 19:33-34	14 R-CA-39 Rep. Ed Royce (202) 225-4111	15 D-NY-24 Rep. Dan Maffei (202) 225-3701	16 R-NJ-7 Rep. Leonard Lance (202) 225-5361	17 R-NY-19 Rep. Chris Gibson (202) 225-5614	18 Good Friday (202) 224-3121	19
20 Easter Sunday Revelation 7:9-10	21	22	23	24	25	26

Call Congress & Share Your Prayer



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visit www.networklobby.org/LentenPromise
for an easy post scheduler



Read Our Weekly Reflection
Each Sunday



Day of Fasting
With Fast 4 Families

The Gospels and Migration

Week 1 (March 5-8)

Matthew 2:13-23

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:

*"A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud lamentation,
Rachel weeping for her children;
she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."*

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.

The U.S. Bishops and Migration

The U.S. bishops have taken the Gospel teachings and the teachings of the Popes and applied it to the immigration reality in the United States. In January 2003, the U.S. bishops issued the pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. In that document, the U.S. bishops articulated the following five principles that govern how the Church responds to public policy proposals relating to immigration.

1. PERSONS HAVE THE RIGHT TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES IN THEIR HOMELAND. This principle states that a person has a right *not* to migrate. In other words, economic, social, and political conditions in their homeland should provide an opportunity for a person to work and support his or her family in dignity and safety. In public policy terms, efforts should be made to address global economic inequities through just trade practices, economic development, and debt relief. Peacemaking efforts should be advanced to end conflict which forces persons to flee their homes.

2. PERSONS HAVE THE RIGHT TO MIGRATE TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES. When persons are unable to find work and support themselves and their families, they have a right to migrate to other countries and work. This right is not absolute, as stated by Pope John XXIII, when he said this right to emigrate applies when "there are just reasons for it." In the current condition of the world, in which global poverty is rampant and political unrest has resulted in wars and persecution, migrants who are forced to leave their homes out of necessity and seek only to survive and support their families must be given special consideration.

3. SOVEREIGN NATIONS HAVE A RIGHT TO CONTROL THEIR BORDERS. The Church recognizes the right of the sovereign to protect and control its borders in the service of the common good of its citizens. However, this is not an absolute right. Nations also have an obligation to the universal common good, as articulated by Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*, and thus should seek to accommodate migration to the greatest extent possible. Powerful economic nations, such as the United States, have a higher obligation to serve the universal common good, according to Catholic social teachings. In the current global economic environment, in which labor demands in the United States attract foreign laborers, the United States should establish an immigration system that provides legal avenues for persons to enter the nation legally

in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner to obtain jobs and reunite with family members.

4. REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS SHOULD BE AFFORDED PROTECTION. Persons who flee their home countries because they fear persecution should be afforded safe haven and protection in another country. Conflict and political unrest in many parts of the world force persons to leave their homes for fear of death or harm. The United States should employ a refugee and asylum system that protects asylum seekers, refugees, and other forced migrants and offers them a haven from persecution.

5. THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE HUMAN DIGNITY OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS SHOULD BE RESPECTED. Persons who enter a nation without proper authorization or who over-stay their visas should be treated with respect and dignity. They should not be detained in deplorable conditions for lengthy periods of time, shack-led by their feet and hands, or abused in any manner. They should be afforded due process of the law and, if applicable, allowed to articulate a fear of return to their home before a qualified adjudicator. They should not be blamed for the social ills of a nation.

A Prayer: Immigration Reform from the Heart of God

From the Interfaith Immigration Coalition FastAction Campaign

Heart of God, full of mercy, watch over our sister and brother immigrants.
Protect them from harm even as they suffer mistreatment and humiliations on their way.
Touch with your goodness the hearts of we who see them pass by.
Break open our hearts to embrace them and the gift that they are to our communities.

Heart of God, full of compassion, give our brothers and sisters in Congress the gift of compassion.
Open their eyes to the pain and longing of those affected by their decisions.
Give them wisdom as they struggle to repair our unjust immigration system.
Break open their hearts to embrace the dreams of our immigrant parents, siblings, and friends.

Heart of God, full of love, we give you glory for all the blessings you have given us.
Help us to share those blessings with others that we may all know that you are a God of mercy, a God of compassion, a God of love.

Break open our hearts that we might embrace the challenge to build a land, a nation, a community where all are welcome.

For Reflection:

Who are the people that I know who have immigrated to the United States? Have I met them in my family, among my friends, in my neighborhood, or in my congregation? Have I asked them about their migration journey? Why or why not?

Why might some of the people I know have come to the United States?

Citizenship

Week 2 (March 9-15)

Matthew 25: 31-40

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."

Widian's Story



"Raised in a tiny village in Galilee, my father, the eldest of 5 children, was raised by loving parents who made a meager living as poor farmers. My mother, who was raised in an orphanage from a young age by a community of Sisters in Jerusalem, married my father at seventeen. During my childhood, my father worked as a mechanic and my mother as a teacher. While our home was filled with love, my parents recognized that their children would have better opportunities for education, advancement, and success in the U.S.

Our family arrived to the United States on a temporary visitors' visa, which we overstayed after six months. My parents made great attempts to become "legal," spending money on attorneys who stole from us and gave us false hope, only to leave our family wondering if we were ever going to have the chance to stop living under the shadows and fear of deportation. Beginning at the age of eight (and beyond), I did not quite understand what our immigration status meant or even where it stood. The only thing I knew was that our status was a secret and we were never to mention that fact to anyone, ever.

I entered college without the ability to receive federal financial aid because of my status. My parents helped support me until I began working and supporting myself. After completing graduate school, I moved across the country to complete a year of service with the Center for FaithJustice, which helped me see the intersection between faith, service, and social justice.

Profoundly touched by my experience as an undocumented immigrant, and especially in recognition of how blessed my family has been relative to millions of others, my experience has informed my commitment to supporting those most in need. Throughout my many years as a social worker, I have had the honor to meet God in inner-city at-risk youth, homeless men and women, pregnant and parenting women struggling to maintain sobriety, the elderly, faithful friends and colleagues, my faith community, family, and strangers.

Recently, three months shy of my thirty-first birthday, with no criminal record, having lived in the U.S. at least five consecutive years and arrived before the age of 16, and holding an advanced degree, I completed my application for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. After a seven-hour wait in line to complete my application, I was certain that God

had awaited my arrival in that Catholic Charities immigration office since the Fourth of July twenty-two years earlier. But my new status is bittersweet as I, along with millions of others, pray in hopeful expectations that undocumented immigrants all over the country will have the opportunity to live freely in our home.”

Why Immigration Reform Must Include a Path to Citizenship

From the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Justice for Immigrants Campaign

Background: The U.S. Senate recently passed an immigration bill that contains a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented persons in the country. The House of Representatives has, to date, refused to consider a bill with a path to citizenship, suggesting that they could simply give legal status to some immigrants or not confer any legal status at all. The U.S. Catholic bishops strongly support a path to citizenship for the undocumented, for the following reasons:

- An immigration bill that does not provide a path to citizenship but simply legal status to the 11 million would sanction a permanent underclass in our society, with one portion of the population without the same rights as the majority. As U.S. history has informed us, this is a recipe for social unrest and potential exploitation of a minority population, contrary to the founding ideals of the republic. It would keep a large group in our country disenfranchised, unable to petition their government as the majority can and unable to choose their leaders. This is not the American way.
- Citizenship provides full protection from deportation. Under current law, a person can be deported for a wide variety of non-violent offenses, such as drug possession, petty larceny, or fraud, even if they are permanent residents with a green card. With citizenship, the federal government cannot deport a person from the country, away from their family and livelihood. Thus, anything less than citizenship would subject a portion of the population to penalties not applicable to the majority.
- Citizenship confers full membership in our society and provides full protection from our government against foreign actors. For example, a U.S. citizen can receive protection from the U.S. government overseas in a crisis situation, or from requests from a foreign government for extradition. U.S. citizens also can travel more freely, as they are able to use a U.S. passport and thus gain admittance to other countries without needing a visa.
- A path to citizenship would ensure those who earn their citizenship are good citizens. If they are willing to meet all the requirements to become an American citizen, then they certainly will appreciate being U.S. citizens and contribute to their new nation. Are these not the type of citizens our government would want? It also would ensure that immigrants take pride in their new country and are socially accepted in our culture.
- A path to citizenship would not be an amnesty, as many would argue, but would require immigrants to earn their way and pay restitution for their illegal presence. They also would have to learn English and work.
- Providing citizenship to immigrants does not mean they would vote for one party over another. Immigrant populations are just like any other group of persons, and have a wide range of political views and loyalties.

For Reflection:

What are the ways Widian served as an example of a model citizen, despite her status as an undocumented immigrant? How does her story relate to others that I have met?

How might other aspiring Americans contribute to society if they were able to come out of the shadows?

How do we appeal to Congress to pass immigration reform legislation that is inclusive of all migrants, regardless of when they arrived in the United States?

Family Unity

Week 3 (March 16-22)

Ruth 1

In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me." Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Luisa's Story

After crossing the length of Mexico over ground to get to the border, "Luisa," a 36 year old widow from the indigenous municipality of Tamazulápam de Espiritu Santo in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca, and her 20 year old son "Pedro" attempted to cross into the United States by walking through the harsh and unpopulated desert near Nogales, Arizona. Unlike most unauthorized migrants who attempt to cross the U.S. – Mexico border, Luisa and Pedro did not contract the service of a guide. Instead, they attempted to traverse the desert with three others from Tamazulápam, which is among the poorest and most marginalized municipalities in the country. They had plans to settle in Los Angeles, where many members of their community lived and could help them to find work.

After walking through the hot sun for several hours, Luisa was unable to keep going. Pedro refused to leave his mother's side. Eventually she and her son were apprehended and detained by U.S. Border Patrol agents. Despite telling the Border Patrol agents (both in the field and at the detention center) that Pedro was her son, and asking if they could stay

together, the two were placed in separate cells. After spending 24 hours in the detention center, Luisa was deported to Nogales, Mexico without Pedro. At the time of our interview on October 16, 2012, Luisa had been staying in a shelter for migrants in Nogales for ten days, unable to ascertain the whereabouts of her son, who had likely been deported to a different port of entry. As a woman now alone without a family member or trusted companion, and well aware of the widespread and worsening practice of kidnapping migrants, Luisa fears making the journey home.

Talking Points about Family Unity & Current Legislation

From the Interfaith Immigration Coalition

- Families are the fabric of strong communities and economies. Immigration reform must facilitate family reunification.
- Family unity spurs integration, as families provide strong foundations for learning English, purchasing a home, pursuing employment, starting a business, preparing children for school, and contributing to communities.
- We are not opposed to increases in employment-based visas, but they should not come at the expense of family visas - it's not a zero-sum game. People want to join their families through legal channels, but with wait times as long as 24 years, have no real options to do so. To fix the immigration system, we need to recognize the God-given desire to be with one's family.
- We are opposed to proposals that would eliminate the ability of U.S. citizens to sponsor their siblings, found both in the Senate bill and in the SKILLS Act as it passed the House Judiciary Committee. Brothers and sisters should be able to be together. Our sacred texts show the significance of a unified family. Mary & Martha and disciples Simon Peter & Andrew, as well as James & John are examples of siblings remaining close as adults. In today's current immigration system, Ruth would not have been able to travel with Naomi.

You can also view a study conducted by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University in conjunction with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. [Estimates of the Size and Demography of the Undocumented Non-Citizen Population in U.S. Catholic Dioceses, 2013.](#)

A Prayer for Families

(excerpted from 2010 National Migration Week Resources)

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of families. We are grateful for all of the joy and love that they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life. Show mercy to those who travel in danger, and lead them to a place of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice.

Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

For Reflection:

What would you do if you felt the best option to care for your family was to live thousands of miles away from them? Can you imagine such a scenario?

What are the biggest stresses in your family that work against stability and unity? How would the looming possibility of deportation impact this stress?

How might you suggest that families remain connected when separated by thousands of miles? Is there something your local Church might do -- or is doing -- to assist in this struggle?

Safer Deportation Practices and Private Prisons

Week 4 (March 23-29)

This week, President Obama is scheduled to meet with Pope Francis. We hope and pray that immigration reform will be a topic of discussion, particularly in light of the historic trip Pope Francis took to Lampedusa and his focus on the suffering of migrants. Pope Francis clearly stated that we are all responsible for the globalization of indifference and that we are called to stop unjust systems that harm our brothers and sisters that are more vulnerable than us. We pray that President Obama sees the small, but meaningful steps that could be taken to make our deportation practices safer. Additionally, this week we pray for those members of Congress who receive excessive funds from private prisons.

Isaiah 1:13-17

Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations- I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

The Impact of Bad Deportation Practices on Migrants

The evening “Angela,” a woman in her early thirties, arrived at the shelter for women and children in Nogales, Mexico she was desperate to reunite with her husband “Tino” with whom she had traveled North two weeks before. The couple traversed the Sonora desert together and crossed the border successfully, but were picked up at a Border Patrol checkpoint in Arizona only days after entering the United States. The pair was separated upon apprehension and that was the last Angela saw of her husband. Angela described her husband to other migrants and service providers. It was then that she received the awful news that he had been deported three days before her at 3:00AM in the morning and had been murdered. From what Angela was able to ascertain, Tino was among a group of migrants deported in the early morning hours by DHS. In hopes of finding a safe place to stay for the remainder of the night, he walked several miles from the deportation site to a shelter for deported migrants. The shelter, like all other service providers in Nogales, Sonora, closes its doors at 9:00PM in light of the precarious and evolving security situation in the town. Tragically, Tino’s body was found mere feet from the doorstep of the shelter when shelter staff opened their doors in the morning. He had been murdered during the night, targeted for unknown reasons by criminals. Angela was inconsolable, terrified and desperate, unable to conceptualize her next steps, let alone a lifetime without Tino.

Information on Private Prisons:

Major Private Prison/Detention Center Corporations:

Corrections Corporation of America

Campaign Finance: Spent \$5.2 mill. since 1990; \$400,000 (2011-2013);

91% of donations to Republicans (2013)

Lobbying: Spent \$19 mill. since 1990; \$2.6 mill. (2011-2013)

GEO Group

Campaign Finance: Spent \$4.6 mill. since 1990; \$400,000 (2011-2013);

Lobbying: Spent \$3 mill. since 1990; \$700,000 (2011-2013)

CCA acknowledges the need to expand the market: “(o)ur growth is generally dependent upon our ability to obtain new contracts to develop and manage new correctional and detention facilities.”

(2012 <http://ir.correctionscorp.com/phoenix.zhtml?c=117983&p=irol-reportsannual>)

Justice For Immigrants-Focused Catholic Congresspersons Receiving Funding from CCA and/or GEO

(does not include funding from other private prisons, such as the Management Training Corporation)

H. Cuellar, Dem. TX-28, \$27,000 2012-2014

J. Boehner, Rep. OH-8: \$24,000 in 2012-2014

T. Ryan, Dem. OH-13, \$12,500 in 2012-2014 (CCA)

M. McCaul, Rep. TX-10 \$1,000 in 2013 (#7 for GEO)

P. Tiberi, Rep. OH- 12, \$1,000 in 2013 (#7 for GEO)

S. Brooks, Rep. IN-5, \$1,000 in 2012 (GEO)

Legislative Asks Regarding Private Prisons

1. End the bed quota, which requires 34,000 detainees per day, from appropriations language
2. Don't let money from private prisons influence voting to respect and care for immigrants
 - a. Ex.: Don't increase border security and militarization
 - b. Ex. Significantly decrease rather than increase detentions and deportations
3. If already a recipient of funds: refuse future money from private prisons

To Learn More About Private Prisons:

CCA: <http://influenceexplorer.com/organization/corrections-corp-of-america/46a43aff0a6743c59fbabd588e8ee743?cycle=2014>

GEO: <http://influenceexplorer.com/organization/geo-group/7dfa33488aad4908ac1c75336c20db05?cycle=2014>

Congresspersons, etc. www.opensecrets.org

Articles:<http://grassrootsleadership.org/blog/2013/07/who-house-cashing-immigrant-detention> <http://www.thenation.com/article/173120/how-private-prisons-game-immigration-system>

Priorities for Making Deportation Practices Safer

To read more about these recommendations, view our [one-page recommendations](#).

1. End all night-time deportations
2. End family separation during the deportation process
3. Do not deport individuals to particularly dangerous locations
4. Return all belongings prior to deportation
5. Provide prior notification to Mexican authorities of people with special needs
6. Provide opportunities for border NGO input

A Prayer from Pope Francis

Quoted from Pope Francis homily on the Island of Lampedusa: "The Globalization of Indifference"

O Lord, in this Liturgy, a Liturgy of repentance, we ask forgiveness for the indifference towards so many brothers and sisters, we ask forgiveness for those who are pleased with themselves, who are closed in on their own well-being in a way that leads to the anesthesia of the heart, we ask you, Father, for forgiveness for those who with their decisions at the global level have created situations that lead to these tragedies. Forgive us, Lord!

O Lord, even today let us hear your questions: "Adam, where are you?" "Where is the blood of your brother?" Amen.

For Reflection:

Pope Francis has said we are all responsible for a globalization of indifference. In broad terms, how does that apply to immigration reform?

This week's theme takes us to a different place in our discussions. We are somewhat-to-very aware of the migrants in our own communities; but, unless we live in the Southwest, we're probably not mindful of those crossing unto the US on a daily/nightly basis, nor familiar with the private prisons being funded for the purpose of detaining them. As a first step in remedying such uninformed indifference, how will you learn more?

Children

Week 5 (March 30-April 5)

Matthew 18:1-5

At that time the disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me."

The Plight of Migrant Children

By Luis Enrique Jacquez, El Paso, Texas



Five year old migrant child from El Salvador entered the US by himself. He drew this plane saying it reminded him of God because if he had God in his heart, God would be the plane to take him to his mother.

Cynthia sat nervously as she waited for her social worker. A young woman stepped out of the office and sat down next her. Her social worker stepped out and said in Spanish, "Cynthia you can come in now." The woman turned to this young girl from Honduras and gasped, "Tu eres Cynthia? Are you Cynthia? Soy tu mamá! I am your mother!" Tears immediately fell from their eyes. Fourteen years had pass since they had seen each other. Cynthia, now sixteen, ventured to the United States containing only a vague memory of her mother. Extreme poverty in Honduras forced her mother to leave for the United States to support her family. The short separation her mother imagined turned into an unending odyssey for her daughter to dream of the day when they would be reunited. Cynthia's story is now one of about an estimated twenty thousand unaccompanied minors, migrant youths, who enter the United States. Almost doubling the amount from the previous year. The Office of Refugee and Resettlement estimates about 88% of children derive from Central America.

I have worked with unaccompanied minors for five years. The shelter I work at predominately receives children under the age of twelve. I currently live with the Columban Fathers at the Columban Mission Center in El Paso, Texas. Working with this population has challenged me to discern about where God is calling me. The society has supported me in returning to school for a social work degree and to continue working at the detention center. So many young people come with their own story of their journey filled with danger. Some had been assaulted, robbed, severely injured, or saw horrific things that the mention of this brings terror to their young faces.

I belong to the RICO ministry at St Pius X parish in El Paso. This ministry was created in response to the unprecedented surge of migrant children. The ministry offers bible lessons, the opportunity to sing together, and reflection during prayers of God's constant accompaniment. One girl remarked that listening to the parables reassures her that one day she will be reunited with her parents, that one day soon the long journey will end.

The unfortunate reality is that many will eventually be deported back to their country. But for some, the time in detention is short lived, and thankfully, they are quickly reunited with their family in the U.S.

Once reunited the real untold story begins, since no statistics exist of how many minors eventually are granted permanent residency. Minors must attend public school and report to immigration court. Once turning eighteen, they may be told that their temporary stay has expired and that they must be deported. Minors may even be exploited

within the US. Some will feel the effects of culture shock or feel aggression towards parents whom they see as strangers, one of many untold realities that engulfs the immigration issue.

Minors continue and will continue to arrive in this country. Many come with a dream that has nothing to do with the American Dream. It is the dream to one day be with their mother.

Fact Sheet: U.S. Department of Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Unaccompanied Alien Children Program.

Prayer for Migrants and Refugees

Mary, Most Holy, you, together with St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, experienced the suffering of exile. You were forced to flee to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod. Today we entrust the men, women and children who live as migrants and refugees to your maternal protection.

Grant us the grace to welcome them with Christian hospitality, so that these brothers and sisters of ours may find acceptance and understanding on their journey.

Teach us to recognize your Son

In the migrant who labors to bring food to our tables

In the refugee seeking protection from persecution, war, and famine

In the woman and child who are victims of human trafficking

In the asylum seeker imprisoned for fleeing without documents

May all of those who are far from their place of birth find in the Church a home where no one is a stranger.

We ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

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Text: Marcia Timmel, Adapted from the World Refugee Day Message of Pope Benedict XVI, June 20, 2006.

For Reflection:

Given the importance of family life, the U.S. Catholic bishops believe that family reunification should continue to be a central part of U.S. immigration policy. Yet our current U.S. immigration policy tends to divide families rather than to reunite them. Two million immigrants have been deported under President Obama's administration. How can we ensure that family reunification is at the heart of U.S. immigration policy?

Immigrant children continue to cross the U.S. – Mexico border in increasing numbers each year. Some escape abuse or violence in their home countries. Others come to find family members already in the U.S. Some are victims of human trafficking. What can we do to address the root causes of migration?

Children are currently under the care of the Office of Refugee Resettlement, a division of Health and Human Services. The average stay in the program is 35 days, and 85% are eventually reunited with their families. Adults, in contrast, are detained in immigration detention centers under harsh conditions. How can we move away from the criminalization of immigration to a national policy that reflects values more in line with our faith to welcome the stranger?

Solidarity

Week 6 (April 6-12)

This week, the Fast for Families is scheduled to end its cross country bus tour in Washington, DC.

Exodus 22:21-23

You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry

Lucila's Story: Why She Fasts with the Fast for Families

My name is Lucila. I come from a humble but proud family. This made my decision to tell them I had to leave to continue my education more difficult. Then, crossing the borders, leaving people I love, who are my parents and siblings, and friends in my country, Guatemala, not knowing when I would return. I did not know about strong laws. I just thought of an exit forward thinking of the best future and how to help my parents and a brother who is sick.

I arrived December 9, 2005. The first steps were to find work, study English, and continue with the dream of getting a GED and studying rights. But when I woke up to stark reality I could not continue. I began to work 7 days a week which doesn't give me time to go to school. Still I do not lose hope for an education, for immigration reform, but for that I have to fight to achieve my dreams and the dreams of 11 million people like me who just want to get out of poverty and put a plate of food on the table.

The reason I decided to fast is because I believe it is the only way that the Congress will listen to us. As an undocumented immigrant I worry every day about being deported. I have seen family and friends who only want to work and make a better life being deported. I have seen families separated. The people who come to the USA as undocumented work hard to make a better life. It is very sad to see broken families and deportation of working people. I felt that by fasting I could help bring about change.

Living in Solidarity with our Migrant Sisters and Brothers

One of the foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching is the Principle of Solidarity—in short, we **are** keepers of one another, without exception—every sister and every brother. The practice of this virtue has far reaching implications for every decision that we make as families, communities and as members of an interdependent world has global consequences.

It is not enough to feel compassion or to bemoan the plight of so many children, women and men seeking a new life in the U.S., but rather solidarity is a firm resolve to commit oneself to the common good of all. We are meant to be keepers of one another regardless of race, ethnic origin or whatever border one might have crossed. We cannot settle for anything less than a comprehensive reform of an unjust and broken immigration policy in this country if we believe in being in solidarity with the common good of all people. We stand in solidarity with one another when we fast, demonstrate, pray, write letters to our congressional leaders, make phone calls and advocate in any creative way to bring the spotlight of public opinion to focus on unjust issues that can no longer be tolerated by those of us who take our commitment as 'keepers' seriously.

The Scripture readings for this week focus on the Spirit that has been poured out on all people and the desire of that Spirit is to live fully. Jesus was disturbed and deeply moved by pain, suffering and death, yet he was also very aware that all his actions had consequences. Jesus walked that fine line between political reactions to his decisions that called for systemic change and the common good out of which his actions flowed. May this same Spirit give us the courage to do no less than what Jesus lived and died for.

Prayer

Written for Pax Christi USA by Remigio Hernandez, an immigrant to the U.S. (Used with permission)

O holy God, Heart of heaven and earth, praised be your holy name. Your daughters and sons, from all peoples of the world, regardless of borders, praise you.

We praise you and give you thanks because you have placed in our hands the immigrant pilgrims who make the earth flourish and produce, to bring food to the table of the rich and the poor alike.

We praise you and give you thanks because you walk always with those who cross borders, in search of well-being, doing their part in building the world you entrusted to us. On our way, we are mindful of your Presence in the promise to Abraham and in the liberation of your people, Israel.

We praise you and give you thanks for your blessings on all immigrants, and on those who cross all the borders in the US.

And you, O Lady of Guadalupe, empress of the Americas, be always our protector and intercessor for reconciliation and the building of equality and peace. AMEN

For Reflection:

Who are my neighbor immigrants?

What borders did Jesus cross during his life with us?

What "borders" is God asking me to cross today?

Root Causes of Forced Migration

Week 7 (April 13-19):

Leviticus 19:33-34

When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt...

The Facts: Root Causes of Forced Migration

The International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM) defines forced migration as referring “to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people [people displaced by conflicts] as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or **development projects.**” (emphasis added)

Across the planet, millions of people have made what is often an agonizing decision: they must leave their homes in order to support and/or protect themselves and their families. Some migrants are fleeing war, repression or violent conflict; some are forced to leave their homes due to environmental disaster or famine; and most are on the move to escape poverty.

In the 2003 document “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” the Catholic bishops of Mexico and the U.S. identified areas of Catholic social teaching (CST) that guide the church’s response on migration issues, including:

- 1) **Persons have the right to find opportunity in their home land:** Work that provides a just living wage is a basic human need. Therefore, everyone has the right to find in their own country the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts; and
- 2) **Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families:** “The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people.” When a person cannot find work in his/her country of origin, s/he has the right to travel to another country to find employment.

January 2014 marked the 20th anniversary of the implementation of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which dramatically shifted Mexico’s agricultural sector: The purging of Mexican tariffs on corn, the change to Mexico’s constitution which eliminated small farmers’ access to public lands (which then allowed that land to be bought by foreign corporations), in addition to the decimation of corn prices for growers in Mexico combined with the skyrocketing retail price of tortillas, led to a huge migration to the U.S. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the number of annual immigrants to the U.S. from Mexico more than doubled from 370,000 in 1993, the year before NAFTA went into effect, to 770,000 in 2000, a 108 percent increase.



Low wages in migrant sending communities often make it impossible for many people to remain at home; those who are able to make it to the U.S. (or another high income country) and find employment can send back money which makes a significant difference for family members who remain behind.

Stories from NETWORK’s Nuns on the Bus

By Sister Simone Campbell, SSS

There are two stories from the bus that shout in my memory to be told. They are entwined in motivation but so different in results.

The first occurred on a hot, hot afternoon in San Antonio, Texas. There we had an outdoor press event and rally to speak out for comprehensive immigration reform. Congressman Pete Gallego, who had just come in from the airport after a political trip, stood at the podium with his prepared text. His eight year old son Nicholas saw him and (oblivious to the big crowd) ran up and threw his arms around his father's waist to greet him.

Congressman Gallego, obviously touched, put his papers down and said that he was not going to use his prepared text. Rather, he spoke from the heart and told us that his attitude toward immigration reform was forever changed the first time he held Nicholas right after he was born. He told us that he knew in that moment that he would do whatever he could to protect his son. He would even give his life for his treasure. Many of us had tears in our eyes as we listened and knew the deep truth that he was sharing as a parent.

The second story came a few days later on the Pascua-Yaqui reservation outside of Tucson, Arizona. There, after our 'friendraiser,' Chairman Peter Yucupicio of the Pascua-Yaqui nation told me of the horror of living on the reservation [and] having desperate people try to cross the desert. He told me that he had found a woman curled up under a large desert bush. When they turned her huddled body over, they found that she was cradling the body of her infant child. What immediately struck me was that this nameless woman had the same commitment to her child as Congressman Gallego and most parents everywhere. The only difference is that her quest to protect her child ended in both of their deaths.

Prayer for migrants

For all those who see "home" and all it means disappear behind them;
For all those who cannot see a home in the days ahead of them;
For all those who dwell in daily insecurity;
For all those who are weary and without a safe place to rest their heads;
For all families in migration we pray.

May the image of the Holy Family fleeing oppression stay with us each night as we are blessed with returning to a home. May we also be blessed with compassion for those still weary, still seeking, still with so far to go.

Adapted from a prayer by Jane Deren, Center of Concern, 2007

For Reflection:

What would I be willing to sacrifice for the people I care the most about?

What are some of the other reasons why people might be forced to leave their home, and how am I contributing to the causes? What can I do to reduce the negative impact I have on the global community, and how can I encourage others to do the same?

People often migrate because of very low wages in their home community. Am I willing to pay a little more for the goods I buy that in turn provide more livable wages for others?

What are other ways we could appeal to members of Congress to encourage their support for immigration reform with a path to citizenship?

An Easter Reflection

Revelation 7:9-10

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Closing

He is risen! And because of what Jesus has done for us, we have become a resurrection people --- called to live into God's reign on earth as it is in heaven. Over the course of Lent, you have reflected on God's vision of shared abundance, hospitality, and love of neighbor. Now, invite your members of Congress to share that vision, and offer witness to them that you have faith our broken immigration system can be redeemed.

[Take action](#) by sending the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Justice for Immigrants Postcard to your member of Congress. Tell your representative that you support immigration reform that:

- Provides a path to citizenship for undocumented persons in the country
- Preserves family unity as a corner-stone of our national immigration system
- Provides legal paths for low-skilled immigrant workers to come and work in the United States
- Restores due process protections to our immigration enforcement policies
- Addresses the root causes (push factors) of migration, such as persecution and economic disparity

Visit the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Justice for Immigrants Campaign website for more ways you can get involved: www.justiceforimmigrants.org

*If you have questions about immigration, this toolkit, or its implementation,
please contact the organization that sent this packet to you.*

For other questions, contact Ashley Wilson at awilson@networklobby.org