

“Welcome at the Manger” Devotions



Week #1



Week #5



Written by Interfaith Immigration Coalition Partners



Week #2



Week #4



Week #3



In the weeks before Christmas, we invite you to light candles on an Advent Wreath and reflect on ways those present at the nativity were welcomed at the manger. As you consider the migrant story of the Christ family, we offer stories of immigrant “Dreamers” and “Temporary Protected Status” holders for each week—and encourage you to offer the gifts of your prayers and actions to assist immigrants in this urgent moment!

Developed by Interfaith Immigration Coalition members Ann Scholz, Marie Lucey, Paola Marquez, Maria Orlandini, and Sharon Stanley-Rea.
For questions about this resource, contact ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org, 202-957-7826.



“Welcome at the Manger”

Advent: Week 1 – Angels



(Korean nativity above right by: Woonbo Kim Ki-chang, *The Annunciation*)

WEEK ONE: FEAR NOT, DREAMERS!

Scripture: Luke 1:13, 31; Luke 2:10. “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard.” “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” “Do not be afraid (shepherds); for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy for all the people.”

Reflection: Today’s Dreamers wait anxiously for our government to make a decision about the Dream Act. They are very concerned, not just for themselves, but also for their families. But most Dreamers are no longer afraid to raise their voices and challenge policies that would harm them and their families. They march, rally, visit congressional offices, hold public prayer vigils, and speak to the media. Some even risk arrest in their protests. They have assumed leadership for their future, supported by faith organizations and immigrant rights groups. With these Dreamers, we hope, pray and act for a proclamation of good news.



Story: A young dreamer (unnamed for protection) shared his story during the 22 days-24 hours vigil led by NAKASEC in August with other Korean Dreamers outside the White House. He was 7 years old when his family emigrated to the U.S. with a visa, which they overstayed. He became aware of their status when he wanted to attend college, so he applied for AB 540 and the California Dream Act specifically for undocumented students. During his first year in college, he was just eager to enter into college life, living each day as an American. But as he became more aware of the issues surrounding the un-

documented community, he engaged more, saying, “Although we don’t all have the same story, we are all part of this. I support the clean DREAM Act because it gives hope to our immigrant youth. . . The fact that we could live without fear in the land we call home, would truly be a relief.” He works for passage of the DREAM Act without harmful amendments or compromises, but he also believes that his parents also need to live without fear of deportation. “We will continue to advocate,” he says, “on behalf of our heroes, our parents.”

Actions/Resources:

- View the YouTube of another dreamer from Korean Resource Center and her work to support dreamers and TPS recipients at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=63yD45idHSY>
- Join the December 5-6 “Stand With Dreamers” actions in DC by calling your Senators and Representatives at **202-224-3121**, urging them to support passage of the Dream Act of 2017 (S.1615/H.R. 3440) before Christmas and without harmful amendments or compromises. Every day 122 immigrant youth lose their status when their DACA expires, which means they lose work permits, protection from deportation, and the hope they once had through DACA. Dreamers are our friends, neighbors, co-workers, teachers, students, and medical professionals. Support them with your phone calls, visits, letters to the editor.

Prayer: With your angels, O God, we encourage young Dreamers to continue to raise their voices without fear. While we admire their courage, may we speak up and act with them in this Advent Season of hope and expectation. Amen.

Developed by Interfaith Immigration Coalition members Ann Scholz, Marie Lucey, Paola Marquez, Maria Orlandini, and Sharon Stanley-Rea. For questions about this resource, contact ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org, 202-957-7826.



“Welcome at the Manger”

Advent: Week 2 – Mary



(Above right: “Our Lady of Virgen Guadalupe” by Pristine Cartera Turkus)

WEEK TWO: PRAYING WITH MARY

Scripture: Luke 1:46, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit finds joy in God my savior.”

Reflection: Mary’s song, her canticle of praise to the God of love, was born in the heart of a mother, a mother who carried the Light of the World in her womb. What must it have been like for this young woman from Nazareth to know that she was to mother the Son of God, the one who would bring glad tidings, proclaim liberty, restore sight, and set us all free?

How much she must have loved that divine life within her womb. How much she must have given of herself to nurture and protect the Promised One. Do you think she feared for her child’s safety, for our Savior’s health and well-being? Did she know she would have to flee with her child to save his life? Did she suspect that he would be hunted by the authorities? Did she know anything of the suffering and loss that would befall her family? Did she know or did she simply do what every mother does? Did she simply trust in God, love her child completely, and sacrifice everything, as mothers do?

Story: Rosa Maria is a young Dreamer who lives with cerebral palsy. Her parents risked the journey from Mexico when she was just 3 months old hoping to find better medical care for their daughter. Ten years later Rosa Maria was detained by Border Patrol Agents who had camped outside her hospital room as she recovered from surgery. The saga began on October 24 as Rosa Maria headed from her Laredo home to the hospital in Corpus Christi. She was accompanied by her citizen cousin because her mother, Filipa de la Cruz, who is also undocumented, feared her presence would put her daughter at risk if they were stopped by Border Patrol. Unfortunately, they were stopped and after determining that Rosa Maria was undocumented, agents followed them to the hospital, guarded her during surgery, and then took her into custody.



Rosa Marie has since been reunited with her family, but her future is still uncertain. It is not clear if the Trump administration will proceed with deportation or if Congress will act to protect this young Dreamer and the nearly 800,000 like her by passing the bipartisan Dream Act 2017. Without legislative action, Dreamers face separation from their families, return to countries they do not know, and an end to their dreams of becoming citizens and continuing to contribute to our communities.

Action:

- As people of faith we are called to be in solidarity with our community members, congregants, and neighbors who live in daily fear of deportation. This advent we are especially mindful of Dreamers, those young people who long for citizenship. Call on Congress to immediately at: **202-224-3121** to enact the bipartisan [Dream Act 2017](#) (S.1615/H.R.3440).
- Welcome Dreamers by celebrating the Mexican nativity journey tradition of [Las Posadas](#). Plan your celebration and share resources from: <https://cliniclegal.org/posadas>
- Pray with Dreamers by sponsoring a [Dream Sabbath](#). See a toolkit at: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Dream-Sabbath-2017-4-FINAL-09.108.17.pdf>

Prayer: Loving God, in whom we rejoice, give us the heart of Mary. Teach us to love as courageously as she who gave everything to nurture your dream for the world. Like Mary, we entrust our dreams and our Dreamers into your care. Amen.



“Welcome at the Manger”

Advent: Week 3 – Joseph



(Above right: A Honduran “nacimiento”—arrangement of figures depicting Jesus’ birth.)

WEEK THREE: WE WILL PROTECT ONE ANOTHER

Scripture: [Lk 2:1-5] In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Reflection: The Temporary Protected Status (TPS) program may be news to many, but it has allowed over 300,000 people to live, work, and raise families in the U.S. for over 20 years. These families now face the possibility of being separated and their dreams torn to shreds by an administration with little regard for their futures. The countries they may be forced to return to have not recovered from the situations which led to TPS in the first place. With over 273,000 US citizen children from TPS families facing the prospect of either losing their parents or losing their homes, it is our responsibility to protect and guard our TPS brethren as Joseph once did for Jesus. We must raise awareness, provide platforms to lift their voices, and demand their experiences be acknowledged.



Story: (*Name changed for protection.) Emilio’s parents did not know each other when they left their native Honduras nearly 30 years ago to build a better life in the U.S. They met in New York, where they married, received TPS status, and raised two children. Emilio’s mother has worked as a shift supervisor at the same company for the past 25 years, and his father has worked with various family-owned construction companies in New York. Their hard work put Emilio and his sister through private school through 8th grade, and secured their enrollment in a top-tier high school where they enrolled in AP-level courses. Emilio went on to earn his undergraduate degree and MBA in just four years, and now—inspired by his father—supports other small business owners as a director at a consulting firm. His sister, very accomplished and pursuing a PhD program in child psychology, was tragically killed by a drunk driver in 2017. As Emilio’s family reels from the loss of his sister, they are burdened by the possibility of his parents having to return to Honduras, leaving their home (and a mortgage) behind. “I ask the government not to break up my family even more so,” he says.

Actions/Resources:

Emilio’s parents are from Honduras, so will need to re-register for their TPS status.

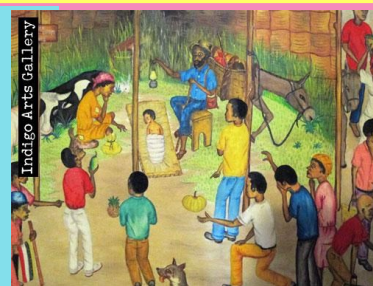
- Consider hosting a fundraiser to help members of your community pay for their TPS re-registration fees.
- For those who are still waiting on the government to decide whether their country will continue to have TPS, make your voice heard loud and clear on social media with the hashtag #SaveTPS and re-post articles and videos of people affected (like this one: <https://youtu.be/SGC6wghPePYc>).
- For those whose TPS status has been terminated, get them to an immigration legal service provider as soon as possible to see if they’re eligible for anything else. You can find a qualified immigration legal service provider near you at cliniclegal.org/directory.
- Finally, keep lobbying your legislative representatives to create a permanent solution that would protect all TPS holders.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the strength to protect my TPS brothers and sisters even when I and them are most distraught. May the support I provide be hopeful and gracious and free of anger. May the anger I feel be channeled into inspiration, inspiration that leads to resolution, peace, and safety for us all. Amen.



“Welcome at the Manger”

Advent: Week 4 – Shepherds



(Above right: Nativity by Georges Jean, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.)

WEEK FOUR: CHOSEN AS MESSENGERS

Scripture: Luke 2:8-20, “When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went with haste...and when they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child.”

Reflection: If Jesus had been born today, would you think God might choose to first tell a popular leader, a great social networker, or at least someone with a really large Twitter following? Amazingly, God instead chose to trust a group of lowly shepherds as his original “news spreaders”! Shepherds were typically viewed as outcasts; not much valued, and—even though they helped produce the meat viewed as a prized luxury throughout the Middle East—not very respected for their contributions to society.

Yet, their faithfulness is most exemplary! Despite enduring the fear of being approached by a group of angels, they chose to migrate immediately to seek Jesus. Even though they literally had to go search for “a baby in a haystack,” they trusted God would guide them. And, even though some ancient laws rejected the testimonies of shepherds as being anything but “fake news,” God selected their voices to carry the story of his world-altering birth. Could WE have the faith of the shepherds? Will we listen for the unexpected voices that might be used by God to bring insights and announcements to our own world and hearts?

Story: Up to 58,000 Haitians in the U.S. are TPS recipients. On Nov. 20th, they learned from the Dept. of Homeland Security that their protected status would be terminated effective July 22, 2019. One anonymous Haitian TPS recipient shared in the Washington Post how she came to the U.S. at age 18 on a visitor’s visa, has lived here more than 20 years, works as a nurse in Maryland, and has had TPS status since Haiti’s devastating 2010 earthquake. Now 40, the wife of another TPS recipient, and mother of a 2 year old, she deeply values her Adelphi, Md. Haitian congregation. Even though relatives in Canada ask her to come join them, she says, “I think it’s lack of faith for me to get up and leave.” At the same time, she knows that “If I go to Haiti, I would struggle to live. To take care of children would be hard....with no pure water. No shelter. No food. No house in Haiti.” But she continues, “If I leave children here, it will be family separation.”



Eglise Baptiste Du Calvaire, Adelphi, Md.

Action:

- Go to: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/10/20/449400/tps-holders-are-integral-members-of-the-u-s-economy-and-society/> to learn more about the contributions TPS recipients make to our communities.
- Call **202-224-3121** to tell your Senators of your support for Haitians and all TPS neighbors, and to request they enact S.2144 to protect each population at risk of losing TPS. Urge your House representatives to sign on to the bipartisan bill HR.4384, and ask your Senators to support S.2144.
- Write a Letter to the Editor in support of TPS for your local paper, and see guidelines for this and other actions in our Interfaith TPS Toolkit here: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/issues/tps/>.

Prayer: Wise God, who chose shepherds to announce your birth, let this season be spent listening not for the power of our own voices but for the guidance of unexpected prophets among us. Help us hearken to the stories of immigrants in the fields of our neighborhoods, so that we then might be both willing and courageous to share the struggles of their experiences, in hopes for policies that heal and hold families together. Amen.

Developed by Interfaith Immigration Coalition members Ann Scholz, Marie Lucey, Paola Marquez, Maria Orlandini and Sharon Stanley-Rea. For questions about this resource, contact ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org, 202-957-7826.



“Welcome at the Manger”

Advent: Christmas Eve – Jesus



CHRISTMAS EVE—JESUS, THE DREAM OF GOD

Scripture: While they were there, the time came for her Child to be born. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a Son. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.... Luke 2:6-7

Reflection: On Christmas Eve we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the one we have been waiting for. There is a warm feeling as we wait, yet Jesus' entrance into the world started with a refusal: there was no room for his parents in the inn. How is it possible that Jesus, the Incarnate Word of God, the Dream of God for the world, was placed in a manger? Yes, God had a dream to make the world a place of Love by sending his very own son to teach us how to love, but it did not start with a welcoming party. This year we celebrate this feast in the midst of turmoil and suffering for millions of young immigrants and their parents. They too had a dream. Parents made the long journey to a strange land to fulfill that dream for their children. Greisa was one of these children, brought here by the dream of her parents. Food was scarce at home in Mexico, so her parents brought her to the USA for a better life, to give her the possibility to dream and become what she wanted in life. Now she is fighting to help others to fulfill their dreams. But there may be no room for her anymore. She may be told, “the USA has no vacancy.”

Story: Greisa Martinez was in college when she got the panicked call from her mom: Her dad had been detained. Within two weeks, she says, he was deported. Greisa hasn't seen him in seven years. Now, at 27, she fights for the dignity and fair treatment of all immigrants as advocacy coordinator for United We Dream. Watch her protest deportations in the Capitol building and confront Rep. Paul Ryan, now Speaker of the House, during his 2014 book tour. And learn why she thought 2016 would be the year to find out who is really on the side of immigrants in this country <https://fusion.net/video/271305/greisa-martinez-the-30/>



Action/Resources:

- Spend some time to watch an interview with Greisa at: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?402665-3/washington-journal-greisa-martinez-detention-central-american-immigrants> and get involved.
- Read the stories of: DREAMERS at the Table: [file:///C:/Users/Maria/Downloads/Dreamer%20Voices%20Welcome%20at%20the%20Table%20IC%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Maria/Downloads/Dreamer%20Voices%20Welcome%20at%20the%20Table%20IC%20(1).pdf).
- Consider inviting a dreamer at your table this season, get to know them personally. No matter what happens for their legal status do everything possible to stand with them.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, don't let us miss You this Christmas. Help us to simplify our activities and traditions so we can focus our celebration on Your birth. Thank You for being the Dream of God for us. I ask You for peace to reign in our hearts. Give Peace especially to the DACA recipients, their families and to all those who are anxious and live in fear of deportation. Thank You for the simple but life-changing message of Your love for us. Amen.