

**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants**

**Focus: Temporary Protected Status**

**Scripture:** *"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?....If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and....you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in." Isaiah 58:6, 9-10, 12*

**Reflection:** Theodore Roosevelt, in his 1910 speech "Citizenship in a Republic" spoke, "It is not the critic who counts." Instead, he says, credit should be given to the one "who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly." After decades in Babylonian exile, some of the community in the time of Isaiah 58 had now re-migrated back to Judah, and the temple had even begun to be rebuilt. But progress was slow, and the building construction challenges paled before the strains of tackling social and economic inequalities and suspicions between groups that threatened community stability and identity. Who really "belongs"? How deeply should new residents be welcomed? What does it mean to live faithfully in community? These were ancient questions, as well as current ones still.

Cutting through the chaos, the prophet clarifies that just treatment of our neighbors, far more than pious religious actions, has everything to do with properly honoring God. Because God deeply values the suffering who have lived under oppression, they—who we may say have been "marred by dust and sweat and blood"—are worthy of credit. They must be freed not detained, welcomed not blamed, fed not feared, and offered dignity not denigrated. Only by loving the vulnerable can any society become whole, and our streets and hearts become stable. Thus, Isaiah teaches us how welcoming and protecting our neighbors in need is a form of worship, and a way to show our love for God.



*Harrisonburg's Salvadoran community leader urges protections for current TPS recipients. Photo from WHSV, Harrisonburg, VA.*

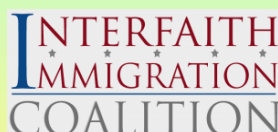
**Story:** There are times when nearly all of us discover "unexpected realities" about towns we thought we've known for nearly all of our lives. It happened for me days ago, when I had the opportunity to accompany multiple Salvadoran TPS recipients from the hard-working rural town of Harrisonburg, Virginia (near my upbringing in the Shenandoah Valley) to visit their U.S. legislators on Capitol Hill. As parents around the table, they shared their experiences of working 21+ years in the U.S., paying taxes, and owning homes and vehicles. "My son is in high school, and I have worked at Perdue (poultry company) for many years" said one mother. "We want residency because our communities are living now with so much uncertainty" due to DHS' recent refusal to re-designate TPS status for Salvadorans.

Her 10 year old U.S. citizen daughter born in Harrisonburg urged leaders, "Please don't separate my family from me!" Their instability and pain calls me to honor Isaiah's plea by seeking to "repair the breach" in their hearts and community caused by removal of protections. Together with them, I will strive to urge Congress to pass a legislative solution for them and the nearly 300,000 TPS recipients to credit their value, and offer stability both to their families and to their town.

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ See resources in the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's "TPS Toolkit" at: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/issues/tps/>.
- ⇒ Contact your US House legislators to urge support for H.R.4253, the American Promise Act, or the bi-partisan H.R.4384, the ASPIRE Act, and call your US Senators to urge they pass the S.2144, the SECURE Act. For each one, call: 202-224-3121.
- ⇒ Learn more about how you can act to support communities with TPS at: [www.savetps.com](http://www.savetps.com).

**Prayer:** God who used the prophets to call us to faithfulness, help us to "worship you" by loving and freeing our neighbors in anxiety and pain. Move us beyond our fears to dare to get "in the arena" by listening, responding in compassion, and standing to support justice for the hurting. Amen.



*Devotion by Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries. Formatting by Sharon Stanley-Rea. For ?s about this resource, contact Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries: [ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org).*





**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants  
Focus: Refugee Resettlement and Restrictive Bans**

**Scripture:** *“I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will recall the covenant I have made between me and you and all living beings. . .” Genesis 9: 13-14*

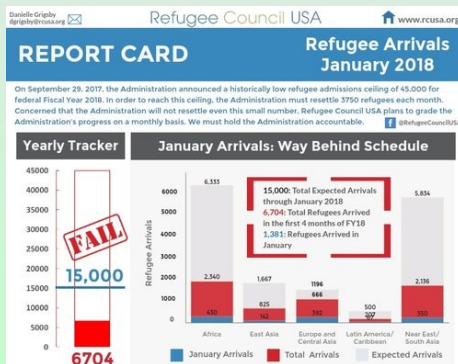
**Reflection:** We are in awe at rainbows and see them as a sign of hope, but they come only after rain—and heavy rains can create difficulties and even suffering, as Noah experienced during the Great Flood. With Noah and with us, God keeps God’s side of the covenant, but what about us? How faithful are we to God’s covenant of love and compassion which was with ALL living beings? Sadly, U.S. government leaders, most of whom claim to be Christian, seem bent on keeping “America for Americans,” and primarily only mean white Americans.



Somali Refugees, Photo Credit:  
International Organization for Migration

Since January, 2017, the President has signed several executive orders dramatically reducing the number of refugee admissions and issuing bans against Muslim-majority countries. For fiscal year 2018, a historically low ceiling number of 45,000 refugee admissions was announced, which would mean resettlement of 3,750 each month. But only 5,323 refugees were admitted in the First Quarter; thus resettlement is way behind schedule. In addition to humanitarian concerns for people seeking to escape from violence, war and persecution, there are economic impacts for the U.S. Refugees are eager to work, as many start their own businesses and create jobs. They are taxpayers, pay into federal benefits programs, work overtime, and become homeowners. Let us learn more about refugee resettlement, and pray and act on behalf of refugees.

**Story:** Afkab Hussein is a young Somali refugee now resettled in Columbus ,Ohio. He spent many years in a refugee camp in Kenya, where he met and married his wife. Once he was finally resettled, he immediately applied for his wife and newborn son through petitions which were approved. But due to multiple refugee bans, Afkab’s wife and son have been blocked from coming to the United States. Afkab has never met his now two-year old son who was born in the refugee camp. He is a plaintiff in the class action lawsuit challenging the administration’s refugee and Muslim ban.



**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ See the Refugee Council USA Report card and other information, including ways to take action, on their website: [www.rcusa.org](http://www.rcusa.org).
- ⇒ Visit [www.interfaithimmigration.org](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org) and Issues dropdown to learn more about the Syrian refugee crisis.
- ⇒ Go to [refugeesarewelcome.org](http://refugeesarewelcome.org) to learn about and join the Refugees Welcome partnership. See this menu: <http://bit.ly/2ExJn2> of options for ways you can welcome refugees in your community:
- ⇒ Also see Justice for Immigrants campaign of the US Catholic Bishops: [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/focus/refugees](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/focus/refugees).

**Prayer:** God of rainbows and refugees, You whose son Jesus was once a refugee, we pray for all refugees resettled in this country, contributing to U.S.

communities and economy. We implore You on behalf of Afkab’s family and others waiting in refugee camps. We beg You to move hearts and minds of government officials to be more compassionate toward refugees and facilitate resettlement processes for a larger number of refugees. We pray for ourselves, that we may find a way to extend welcoming hands to refugees and act on their behalf. *Amen.*



*Devotion by Sister Marie Lucey, Franciscan Action Network.  
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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants  
Focus: Family Based Migration**

**Scripture:** *“Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and through them you will spread to the west and the east, to the north and the south. In you and your descendants all the families of the earth will find blessing.” Genesis 28:14*

*“And whoever does not provide for relatives and especially family members has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” 1 Timothy 5:8*

**Reflection:**



*Photo by Sharina Mae Agellon on Unsplash*

The Lord commands us not only to love our family members, but to look after them as well. While current immigration law allows U.S. citizens to submit applications for their parents and siblings, it can take decades for those applications to be processed. Some wait, despite the pain, but some risk being undocumented to be with their loved ones. Regardless, it is wrong to demonize families for wanting to be together. It is worse to threaten to end one of the few programs that allows them to do so legally.

Our family is our support network. Our parents, aunts, and uncles are our teachers. Our siblings and cousins are our lifelong friends. Immigration policy that does not recognize the value of family unity beyond the nuclear family is not reflective of Christian values. May the Lord allow us to see beyond fear tactics and aid those it threatens.

**Story:** Batsa was born in the U.S., but his parents weren’t. His father has Temporary Protected Status, but the status has to be renewed every other year and the fee was expensive. When Batsa turned 21, he immediately visited a Catholic Charities immigration program and asked how he could apply for his father to become a legal permanent resident. After a few months, Batsa’s father was able to obtain his green card and petition for his wife, Batsa’s mother. Now the family hopes to be reunited with Batsa’s grandparents, who they have not seen in decades because of their immigration status.

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Contact your legislators at 202-224-3121 and let them know you support immigration policies that allow family reunification.
- ⇒ Educate others on the issue and let them know that use of the term “chain migration” is an attack on family reunification.
- ⇒ Share this [graphic](#) (at right) on your social media with the tag #FamilyFacts.

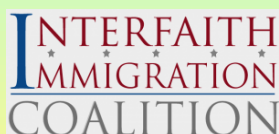
**Prayer:** Dear Lord. Please allow others to see immigrant aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandparents as people, not criminals. May my peers take joy in their own extend families and never wish harm on anyone else’s. May this country’s legislators uphold their duty to work in the best interests of the people they represent, and defend this country’s legacy as a welcoming one. *Amen.*

**Family Reunification** (*famirly re-unification*) n.

The process by which U.S. citizens or permanent residents are reunited with a small number of their family members after detailed vetting and a long wait, sometimes spanning decades. These new immigrants often fill essential jobs that Americans won’t do, and many are small business owners. They don’t qualify for public benefits until years later, but they pay taxes immediately.

*Example sentence:*  
Family reunification made the America we know today and will build the America of tomorrow.

@clinilegal #familyfacts



*Devotion by Paola Marquez, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.  
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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
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Focus: Immigrant Detention & Family Separation**

**Scripture:** *“Be mindful of prisoners as if sharing their imprisonment, and of the ill-treated as of yourselves, for you also are in the body.” Hebrews 13:3*

**Reflection:** There are over 200 immigrant detention centers across the U.S. They hold fathers, mothers, and children, often separated from one another. Some recently crossed the border and asked for help, while others were picked up by ICE for being undocumented. Both are subject to harrowing conditions within these centers, some of which border on human rights abuses.



*Women in California’s largest immigrant detention center, in Adelante. Detainees in orange denote a non-felony crime. Business Insider, 5/9/17. Photo credit: Lucy Nicholson, Reuters.*

No detainees are entitled to legal representation because they are not U.S. citizens. This means that they are often pressured to sign documents they don’t understand and end up being deported, even though some are eligible for asylum or forgiveness of deportation. As we fight against a prison-industrial complex that swallows the lives of our neighbors and friends, we also pray for those who are incarcerated for simply wanting a better life.



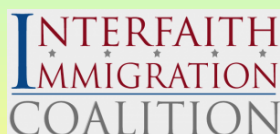
*Maribel & family at left before her deportation. At right, faith partners in Cincinnati speak out for Maribel’s return to her family.*

**Story:** Maribel Trujillo had been in the U.S. for 15 years when she was detained outside her home. She had been given a work permit by the previous presidential administration because she was seen as a low priority for deportation, but that was not enough to protect her under the new administration’s policies. Maribel did not have a chance to say goodbye to her children before being transferred to detention center. Her detention led to social media campaigns, vigils, and comments from prominent figures, but Maribel was deported in April 2017. Although Maribel’s family is suffering without her, they were pleased to learn that her case would be re-examined in 2018. A panel of judges found that her deportation ignored evidence supporting a legitimate fear of returning to Mexico.

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Sign up for [e-mails from Detention Watch Network](#), a non-profit dedicated to exposing the issues behind detention centers and organizing around them. Their website also contains numerous factsheets to educate yourself and your community on detention centers.
- ⇒ Read here to learn more about criminalization of immigrants, even though immigrants are less likely to commit crimes: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states>.
- ⇒ Follow recent developments in Maribel’s case here: <http://wapo.st/2CaSlfK>, and continue to hold her in prayer.

**Prayer:** God, give us the strength to break the chains of those dreaming of freedom, safety, community, and justice. Their cries are muffled through the haze of ignorance and willful obscurity, but we will still walk towards them. We will help end their cries by tearing down walls of greed and hatred and building bridges of compassion and unity. *Amen.*



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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
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**Focus: Sanctuary Protections**



**Scripture:** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son . . .” (John 3:16)*

**Reflection:** From time to time I wonder: Why is there so much pain and sorrow in the world; Why so much violence and hate? Why are some made welcome and others detained and deported? And why did God give his only Son for this world of suffering and sin? Perhaps it is as simple and complex as something we learned as children. God not only loves, God is love. God who is love can do no other than to give everything, wholly, completely, without reservation. And we who are made in God’s image are called to do the same. We are called to love as God loves, to give everything without hesitation and without fear.

Today, in the face of increasing threats to our immigrant neighbors, we are challenged to love as God loves. What will we do when our colleagues are detained? What will we do when ICE comes for our neighbors? What will we do when members of our communities seek refuge? What does love demand? Will we have the strength to give freely of ourselves? Will we have the grace to be the love of God made visible? Will we have the courage risk in love?



**Story:** This is the story of a community of faith who loved enough to risk. [Southside Presbyterian Church](#) is located in one of Tucson’s oldest barrios. Since its founding in 1906, Southside’s diverse congregation of members has always been committed to putting its faith into action. When civil wars in Central America forced refugees to the U.S. Southern border in the 1980s, Southside’s Rev. John Fife ignited the Sanctuary Movement. Sixteen clergy and lay leaders in the Tucson area were arrested and eight convicted for their role in assisting Central American refugees. In 2006, as immigration raids increased, congregations across the country once again chose to provide refuge to those facing deportation.

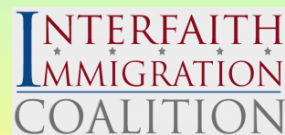
Again in 2014 in the face of rising deportations, Southside Presbyterian chose to risk the ministry of sanctuary. Since then, Southside has provided refuge to two of its neighbors. They sheltered Daniel Neyoy Ruiz for 28 days before he was granted a stay of deportation. Rosa Robles Loreto, a mother who had lived in Tucson for years, stayed for more than 15 months before she could safely leave the sanctuary of Southside. The movement is growing. Before the 2016 presidential election there were approximately 400 congregations engaged in the work of sanctuary. Since then, the number has doubled as communities of faith across the nation give themselves in love and commit to the ministry of sanctuary.



**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Learn more about the [Sanctuary Movement](#).
- ⇒ Learn more about how churches and synagogues are [stopping deportations](#).
- ⇒ Begin a conversation with your community about how you can [accompany immigrants and refugees](#).
- ⇒ [Advocate](#) to make your city a sanctuary for immigrants and refugees.
- ⇒ Sign the [Sanctuary Pledge](#).

**Prayer:** God of love, you loved so completely, so unconditionally, that you gave us your only son, that we might know the love of life eternal. Grant us the grace to love enough to welcome your immigrant and refugee daughters and sons. Grant us the courage to love enough to risk being becoming a sanctuary of your love for all who are threatened. *Amen.*



*Devotion by Sister Ann Scholz, Leadership Conference of Women Religious.  
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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants**

**Focus: Unaccompanied Children & Expedited Removals**

**Scripture:** *Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. John 12:24-26*

**Reflection:** Sometimes, people say, “I did my part” for a particular cause. Today, immigrants have no right to an attorney in immigration court; asylum seekers are locked up for more than 2 years before they receive a hearing and expedited removals, deportations without a hearing, occur frequently. As long as these injustices continue, we, who enjoy freedoms and comforts, have not done our part for justice for immigrants. While we do not have to give our lives, God calls us to sacrifice, as needed, to prevent injustice.



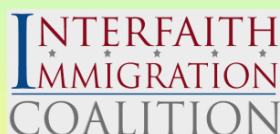
**Story:** As an immigration lawyer, I worked in the Rio Grande Valley when the large wave of mothers and children and unaccompanied minors came across the border from the Northern Triangle. Children were taken from non-related adults at the border to prevent trafficking; but then they would become unaccompanied minors. And no undocumented person has a right to a lawyer or a jury in immigration proceedings. No exceptions. I once watched a toddler crawl around the floor under the defendant table while the judge scratched his head because she had no attorney. There was no one to speak on behalf of this baby. The case was a pathetic, telling, farce. How do you deport a baby? Or even a teenager? To where do we deport them? Ironically, I suspected that, if I posted this story, many people would offer to adopt that child. There is room in our hearts and homes for all God’s children.

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Call your Congressman/woman to tell them, as a person of a faith, you believe immigrants deserve quicker hearings and attorney representation.
- ⇒ In order to sympathize with those who lack a voice, spend one day in Lent and fast from giving an opinion or preference. Let it be done unto you.
- ⇒ Educate yourself regarding immigrant attorney access rights. Go to: <http://www.immigrantjustice.org/index.php/issues/access-counsel>
- ⇒ Read about 98,000 Texas asylees and others in jail who have been waiting for their hearing for more than 2 years: <https://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2018-01-26/immigrant-women-stuck-in-detention/>
- ⇒ Read about ways you can be an advocate for change: <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/10-ways-youth-can-engage-in-activism>

**Prayer:**

“First, they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a Socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me.” *Amen.* -Pastor Martin Neimuller



Devotion by Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Daughters of Charity  
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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants  
Focus: Border Communities Concerns**



**Scripture:** *When the great crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they took palm branches and went out to meet him, and cried out: "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord . . ."*  
**John 12:12-13**

**Reflection:** How will we go out to meet the King of Kings who comes to us in the guise of the migrant, the refugee? More than two millennia ago our God became one of us. He walked among us. The miracle of incarnation is that our God is with us still. Our God continues to walk among us in the person of our neighbors, our friends, and yes

even the stranger who crosses our borders seeking refuge and safety in our embrace. How will we go out to meet the living God who comes to our borders; longs for our welcome; and waits for our embrace?

**Story:** This is the story of a 29 year old father and husband, from the Kino Border Initiative ministry: "A month ago my wife and I left our house. We had thought about it a lot. We spoke many times and we made the decision to come the United States. We have three kids, and we want to give them a better life. I make 60 pesos a day [US\$3.23] Imagine, not even enough to eat. When we made it to the border, the coyote crossed us over and, after walking several days through the Arizona desert, abandoned us. We were a group of 12. My wife and I started falling back. They couldn't wait for us and my wife was already feeling sick. After walking for 14 days in the desert, without water, without food and tired, my wife was feeling worse every single day. She could not speak nor walk and I could hear a rasping sound from her chest.

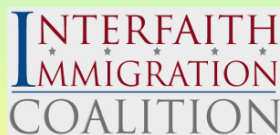
The moment came when she no longer responded to me, and I started to be very afraid. I had to leave her to look for help. After walking for three hours, I found Border Patrol, and I told them that my wife was very ill, and they did not believe me. When they finally became convinced that I was telling them the truth, we went to the place where I had left her, and we found her dead. We never thought that we would live this nightmare, because up to this point, that is the way I see it, I am living a nightmare."



**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Learn more about conditions and communities at the Southern Border through the [Southern Border Communities Coalition](#).
- ⇒ [Kino Border Initiative](#) (KBI) is a binational organization that works in in Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora in the area of migration.
- ⇒ [Columban Mission Center](#) in El Paso, Texas offers exposure programs to visiting groups and facilitates their contact with organizations and institutions related to U.S./Mexico border issues.
- ⇒ [No More Deaths](#) is a humanitarian organization based in southern Arizona, it works to end death and suffering in U.S.-Mexico borderlands and encourages humane immigrant policy.
- ⇒ [Fronteras Compasivas](#) offers humanitarian assistance through the deployment of water stations on routes commonly used by migrants, with the sole goal of preventing deaths.

**Prayer:** Incarnate God, give us the wisdom to see you in the faces of mothers and fathers who risk the crossing for the sake of their children. Give us the courage to accompany those wandering in our deserts. Give us the grace to welcome them as we would welcome you, with open arms and vulnerable hearts. *Amen.*



*Devotion by Sister Ann Schulz, Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
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**Nine Immigration Themed Resources for Lent—  
Encouraging Faith Commitments in Solidarity with Refugees & Immigrants  
Focus: Combating Islamophobia & the Muslim Ban**

**Scripture:** *“He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity/One of those from whom men hid their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.” Isaiah 52:3*



**Reflection:** Christians call this day of crucifixion and death “Good” because Jesus, Incarnate Son of God, took on terrible suffering out of love for ALL God’s people, no exceptions. The prophet Isaiah foretells what God’s Suffering Servant will endure. Jesus is able to identify with human suffering, including what Muslims undergo today: hateful rhetoric and actions, suspicion, misunderstanding and false identification with terrorists. Many families are separated by refugee and Muslim travel bans. The followers of Jesus were not able to save him from suffering and death; rather they were to carry on his mission of love--sharing in the suffering of others and acting on their behalf. This mission is passed on to Christians today. We must stand with our Muslim sisters and brothers, denouncing hate and embracing them with love.

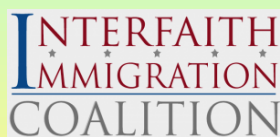
**Story:** Arwa is an American Muslim living in the Bay Area. She relates: “Recently, my sister who’s a Yemeni citizen interviewed at the US embassy in Malaysia and everything went well until she received a letter denying her and her family visa based on Donald Trump’s ban. My family is heartbroken. Oh, did I mention that my father, a US citizen since the 70’s, filed this application on my behalf of my sister back in 2003? I am beyond heartbroken because I know the only reason my sister was denied a visa is because of the Muslim ban.” See other stories, many also heartbreaking, at <https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/living-muslim-ban>.

“My family is heartbroken.”

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Since the Trump Administration issued Executive Orders on January 27, 2017 banning individuals from seven Muslim-majority countries, anti-Muslim rhetoric has led to increased hate crimes and local and state policies targeting Muslim communities. Learn more about the impact of the Muslim bans at [www.nomuslimbanever.com](http://www.nomuslimbanever.com).
- ⇒ Call Congress at: 1-866-961-4293 to register your concerns about the Muslim and refugee bans. See a sample script at <http://www.rcusa.org/advocate-now/>.
- ⇒ Learn more about Shoulder to Shoulder, an interfaith coalition of faith leaders working to address anti-Muslim bigotry and build inclusive communities: [www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org](http://www.shouldertoshouldercampaign.org).
- ⇒ Some Christian churches and organizations have linked with a nearby Mosque to build relationships. Make a connection in your area and host a multicultural dinner or gathering. See guidance on participating in an “Interfaith Iftar” on the Refugeesarewelcome.org website at: <http://bit.ly/2nY07O1>.
- ⇒ Obtain a DVD titled “The Sultan and the Saint,” produced by UPF Muslim film company about the meeting of St. Francis of Assisi and Sultan of Egypt Malik Al-Kamil during the 5<sup>th</sup> Crusade; a Christian and a Muslim who took risk for peace, offering a model for us today. Discussion guide available at: <https://franciscanaction.org/article/purchase-sultan-and-saint-dvd-and-guide>.

**Prayer:** “O God, You are peace. From you comes peace; to You returns peace. Revive us with a salutation of peace, and lead us to your abode of peace.” Amen. (a Muslim prayer)



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**Focus: Protecting Dreamers**

*(Note: At the time of publishing, dreamer legislation continues under discussion by Congress.)*

**Scripture:** *“Now Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. ... (Jesus) He asked her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?’.... Jesus said to her, ‘Mary.’ She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, ‘Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*  
John 20:11-17

**Reflection:** Mary was the first at the tomb and she stayed after everyone else had gone home. Mary was weeping because she wanted to give someone she loved a proper burial. The crucifixion was so real and the Resurrection was still unclear, but she showed up again to do what she could. When she recognizes Jesus’ salvific face, her hope resurrects. She can hardly believe her eyes and she doesn’t want to let Him go. He tells this woman of courage and faith to loosen her grip, take a deep breath. He is not dead and has not gone home, yet. He reassures her that her dreams for salvation have arrived and with Him, they can never die. And he urges that she share the Good News.



At times, Dreamers have thought The Dream was crucified. But they have not let that prevent them from showing up and doing more. Dreamers and their supporters have marched, protested, called Congress leaders and told their stories. In seeking a legislative solution and nearing the March 5th deadline, we have to take a rejuvenating, deep breath. The Dream did not die and Dreamers have not gone home, yet. In dark moments, we sought hope and Jesus arrived in courageous strangers who walk with us. Like Mary, we have more work to do, but we are grateful that our faith and dreams will never die at the hands of politicians. And we must share this good news.

**Story:** Juan is a DACA recipient. He says that he has always known that, one day, the temporary nature of DACA would produce a threat to his safety and his dreams. Right now, Juan volunteers with an immigrant rights organization. He dreams of completing his engineering degree, but for now, there are more urgent issues at hand. He must continue to fight to remain in the USA. “It’s something that I have in my mind every day and it’s something that I incorporate into my everyday life.... What’s the point of an engineering degree if I’m on the verge of being deported the next day?” He weeps but he is not beaten; and he continues to show up because his dream will not die.

**Actions/Resources:**

- ⇒ Use the Interfaith Immigration Coalition’s Dream Sabbath toolkit to learn about and support dreamers: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Dream-Sabbath-2017-4-FINAL-09.108.17.pdf>
- ⇒ Dreamers can be separated from their families. See resources for family unity vigils: [http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/IIC\\_Prayer\\_Vigil\\_Toolkit\\_01.18.13.pdf](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/IIC_Prayer_Vigil_Toolkit_01.18.13.pdf)
- ⇒ During Lent, engage in meaningful, patient conversation with a person who has a different perspective on Dreamer justice. Sacrifice the need to convert; rather, aim for understanding.
- ⇒ Utilize Justice for immigrant’s Family and Dreamer toolkit to learn more and learn how to share the truth about immigration <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/2016site/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Final-DREAM-Toolkit.pdf>

**Prayer:** Precious Lord, we are a resurrection people and we believe in Your Good News that promises salvation for all. We have faithfully believed your love would want Dreamers to find safety in their only home. We ask you to continue to strengthen the hearts of dreamers, and all members of their families, as our nation struggles to understand and offer justice to immigrants who suffer under constant fears of separation. May they find through you the hope you offered to all through Your Resurrection. In Jesus’ name, we ask this.  
Amen.

*Devotion by Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Daughters of Charity. For questions about this resource, contact Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries: [ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org)*

