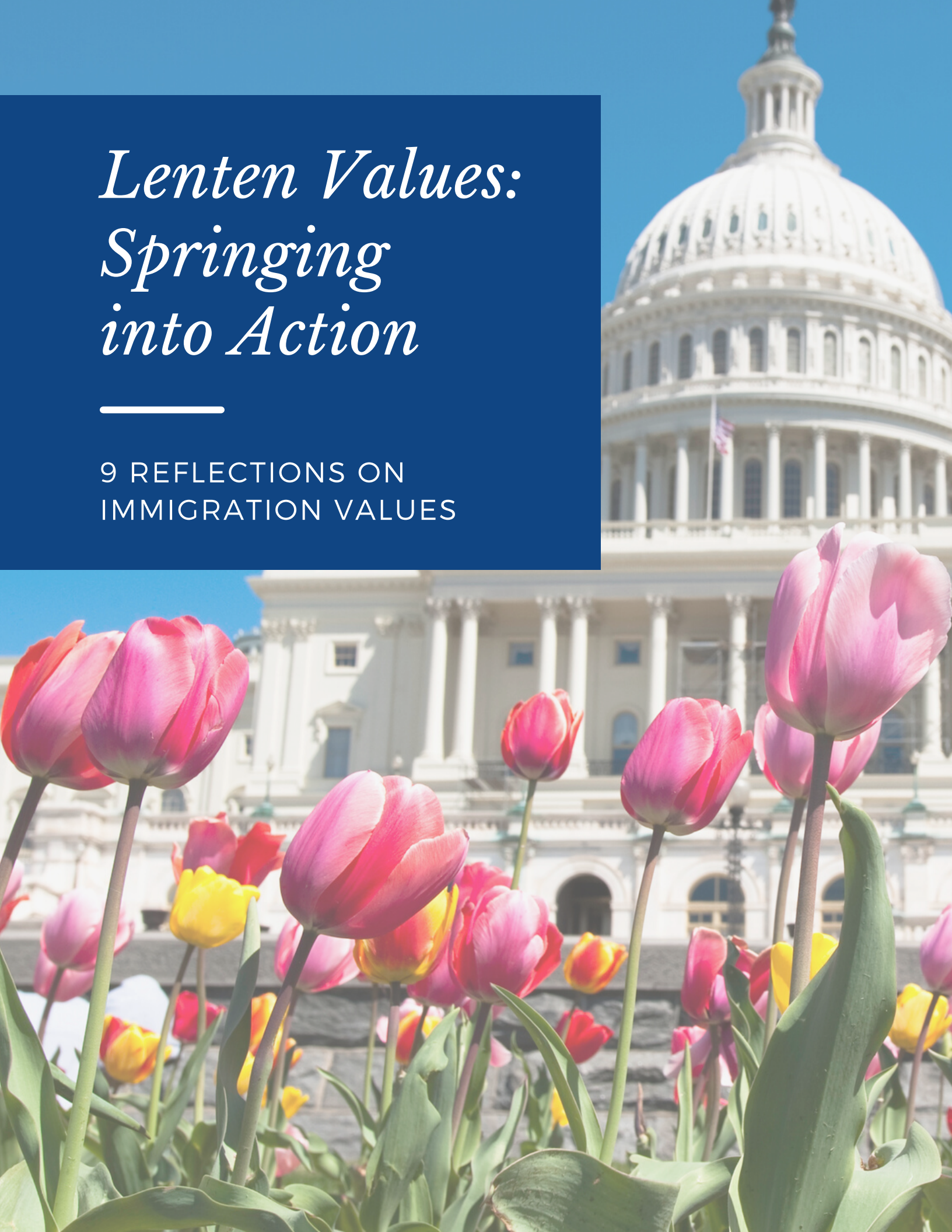


# *Lenten Values: Springing into Action*

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9 REFLECTIONS ON  
IMMIGRATION VALUES



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## Accountability

*"Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble... 'Yet even now,' says the Lord, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.'" Joel 2:1, 12-13*

### REFLECTION

The prophets consistently called for proclamations of faith to be matched with actions that demonstrated commitment to God and promoted justice for the oppressed. Without such actions, they urged, grave consequences would result. Joel, in today's passage, warned that disobedience to God would bring destruction upon the nation of Israel through successive waves of chewing, swarming, crawling, and consuming locusts. Such graphic warnings of calamity could not be ignored—and they mirrored back to the nation God's disappointment in their apostasy.

In recent years, immigration changes have led to suffering at and beyond our borders and terror among immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. How may this season of Lent lead us to urgent fasting, mourning, and repentance to hold our nation **accountable**? And how can that renewal turn us to deepen our hospitality and love for our neighbors?

### STORY

Eun Jin, originally from South Korea, shares: "I came to the U.S. to continue my studies in theology... to help those hurting on the inside. (But) because of a series of missed chances, I failed to keep my status... Because of my lack of status, my children could not go to college, and because I could not drive, my children were limited even more in their studies and activities.

I fear for my children every day that we might come across ICE, that ICE might raid our home. I wish for the new administration to provide a pathway to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants, whether children or adults..."

*Story Continued:*

"Without citizenship, my children cannot pursue the careers that they want... For me, I'd like to do missionary work and getting citizenship will help me to do so."

Read more of Eun Jin's story at:  
[bit.ly/EunJinStory](https://bit.ly/EunJinStory)



Story and photo: NAKASEC

## ACTION

- Join your faith voices to continue to push leaders to ensure pathways to citizenship are included in the Build Back Better bill: [bit.ly/CitizinBBB](https://bit.ly/CitizinBBB).
- Listen to & join in prayer for lives that could be permanently protected through passage of pathways to citizenship: [bit.ly/Prayers4CitzToolkit](https://bit.ly/Prayers4CitzToolkit).

## PRAYER

*God who created humans from the dust of the ground,  
we pray your love would grow  
and that flights immorally sending families away  
would stay grounded.*

*Remove policies that hold communities in fear,  
and instead may we fast in repentance  
for the ways we have been complicit  
in feeding such fears.*

*Replace prejudices with prayers and actions  
rooted in compassion and mercy.*

*Hold us accountable as a nation  
for cruel separations of families and racist practices.*

*Rather, strengthen us to be faithful in honoring  
and growing your Force of Love  
until the oppressed truly become free.*

*Amen.*



## Morality

*"And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'"*

*Mark 1:12-15*

### REFLECTION

Interestingly, right after his baptism, it was the Spirit that drove Jesus into the wilderness. God knew that Jesus' path would be filled with challenges and struggles. Jesus needed to confront the human brokenness that plagues us all.

Lent offers us the opportunity to go into the moral wilderness to lament and ask for forgiveness. God's pardon invites us to engage in efforts that endeavor to repair the brokenness. After witnessing over 400 immigration-related policy changes over the past four years that were immorally focused on harm, detention, and exclusion, we enter the time of Lent prepared to repent and to address the damage these policies have caused. It is our duty to act **morally** and see God in each person. Let us believe in the good news and join the migrant-led voices clamoring for mercy, dignity, change, and justice.

### STORY

Mr. F and his family left their home country due to persecution based on their religion of Islam. They spent weeks detained together in a family immigration prison in Karnes City, TX. ICE cruelly employed "reasons for national security" to demonize Mr. F based on his faith. They released his family but kept him in detention.



*Story Continued:*

Over the past nine months, as COVID-19 has been allowed to ravage prisons and jails, Mr. F contracted the virus and has suffered alone in inhumane conditions. Despite his worsening condition, he has received limited medical attention. Outside of detention, Mr. F's wife recently gave birth to their third child, but Mr. F was not there. She and their children are currently in sanctuary at a church in San Antonio. The congregation is ready to receive Mr. F to reunite the family and assist with their pending immigration cases.

## ACTION

- Learn more about the history of family detention in the US and ensure that it does not return again: [bit.ly/RAICESFactSheet](https://bit.ly/RAICESFactSheet)
- Celebrate family detention ended in December, but remain aware that thousands of families continue to be deported into dangers and denied protections under policies such as Title 42 and MPP.
- Support the efforts of Families Belong Together, which works to reunite families and bring an end to family separation and detention: [familiesbelongtogether.org](https://familiesbelongtogether.org)

## PRAYER

*Gracious and holy God,  
you know our stories, our pain, our struggles.  
Please be present with migrant families who are separated.  
Please be present with detainees who face a pandemic  
in unthinkable conditions.  
Help all of us join efforts to bring justice for the migrant  
and the migrant's family.  
Amen.*

## Community

*"And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, 'Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' Then ... a voice came from the cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!'"*

*Mark 9:2-7*

### REFLECTION

In the Transfiguration passage, Elijah and Moses highlight the prophetic lineage of God's promise of hope. Then God reveals that Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise; Jesus is the Son of God and the disciples must listen to Him because they will carry forth His hope after He is gone. Jesus' revelation and hope are so powerful that Peter wants to freeze and compartmentalize them.

However, Jesus rejects this. The lineage and legacy of Divine Hope have always been ensconced in **community**. So, the disciples descend from this glorious mountaintop experience to confront the injustices and ills of the world. Jesus instructs His disciples to rid the communities of demons that exclude individuals from the group. Today, Jesus beckons us to purge the selfishness, ignorance, and racism from our communities that obscure hope for families. May we listen to Him.

### STORY

Carlos, a U.S. citizen, came to my law practice within days of receiving his family's "Welcome Letter" from the National Visa Center. He had petitioned for his brother and sister to come to the U.S. 22 years ago. While they remained in Mexico, as the law requires, Carlos' siblings waited in hope.

22 years later, in the darkness of a global pandemic, God's light crept in. Their visas became available. Suddenly, Carlos' hope of reuniting with his family is reawakening. Though his family faces continued barriers to reunification, Carlos remains optimistic and hopeful that they will be together again.

## ACTION

- Become versed in the benefits related to effective family-based immigration: [bit.ly/AICfamilyimm](https://bit.ly/AICfamilyimm)
- Continue to learn about the priority of family unity and actions you can take to support partners seeking to Value Our Families.
- Choose to make immigration a determining issue when you vote.
- When you feel discomfort or sadness about separations and social distancing caused by COVID-19, say a prayer for those who have not hugged their family members for years.

## PRAYER

*Oh, dear Jesus,  
families wait in a never-ending "line"  
to reunite with their siblings  
and meet their nieces and nephews.*

*Every day, we see that justice delayed  
is justice denied.  
We cannot give back the years  
they are apart,  
the milestones  
they have missed,  
and the losses  
they have endured alone.*

*Give us the grace to fight for and adopt  
a just, family-based immigration system  
that shines your glorious light of hope  
on the family unit.  
Amen.*





## *Fairness*

*“The law of the Lord is perfect... The decree of the Lord is trustworthy... The precepts of the Lord are right... The command of the Lord is clear...” Psalm 19: 8-9*

### REFLECTION

The laws, decrees, precepts, and commands of human institutions are not always in sync with God’s just and compassionate laws. Too often, U.S. policies regarding immigrants, refugees, and TPS (Temporary Protected Status) holders are unfair and inhumane. Yet in this country, we claim to value **fairness**, “with liberty and justice for all.” During the past four years, in particular, advocates for justice in the faith community had to be reactive—opposing anti-immigrant, anti-refugee, and generally unfair and racist legislation and executive actions.

As the new administration has sought to reverse previous unjust executive orders but Congress has not yet passed their promised that includes a path to citizenship, we must hold elected leaders accountable and work proactively in solidarity with our immigrant siblings in their struggle for fair, compassionate policies that are more in line with God’s perfect, trustworthy, right and clear law of love.

### STORY

“DACA has been a great opportunity for many of us who were brought here undocumented at a very young age by our parents. It gave us the opportunity to have better jobs, opening the door to pursue our goals and dreams. DACA enabled me to pursue my education. During the previous administration, everyone encountered major setbacks, especially immigrants. Dreamers like myself lived in constant fear of what would happen to DACA and our lives....”



Photo: Define American

*Story continued:*

"I have been hopeful that this administration will work toward a more comprehensive immigration reform with dignity for all, including Dreamers. It will not be an easy task, and we will probably encounter many setbacks, but we have to continue to luchar (fight)."

Alicia Dominguez, DACA recipient, Wilmington, DE

## ACTION

Stand in solidarity with DACA recipients who continue to urge the administration and Congress to:

- Move swiftly to reinstate and expand DACA and TPS
- Provide protections for all current (650,000) and eligible (up to 1.3 million) DACA recipients
- Provide protection for undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

Learn how you can join their call to action at [www.wearehome.us](http://www.wearehome.us). We Are Home is a new multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-generational coalition working towards a pathway for citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people in the U.S. and a fair, humane, and functional immigration system.

## PRAYER

*O God, just and compassionate Lawgiver,  
we are grateful for the many ways  
that DACA and TPS recipients  
enrich U.S. society and culture.  
We honor their courage, determination,  
generosity, and amazing hope.  
We ask that You inspire all people of faith  
to join them as they call on elected leaders  
to provide a path to citizenship  
for all immigrants who desire  
to become U.S. citizens.  
Amen.*

## Humaneness

*"God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us... brought us to life with Christ... For we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them." Ephesians 2:4-5, 10*

### REFLECTION

We are created out of great love. Our human dignity comes from God's love for us, not the color of our skin or our immigration status. Mindful of this great love, with no merit of our own and despite our faults, how are we to respond and show our gratitude? God's invitation is certainly to treat each other with the same compassion and mercy that God shows us daily.

We have seen this compassion and consideration go out the window in recent years, especially in how we've treated people seeking asylum and refuge in our country. The Muslim and African Ban and the decimation of the Refugee Resettlement Program have shown how cruel we can be if we forget whom we come from and who sustains us with Love.

### STORY

Mohamed, 38, and Munye, 44, (pictured at right) arrived in the U.S. two days before the President's Inauguration in 2016. Their 20-year-old daughter, Batula, was supposed to join them in Georgia. But the Somalian refugees were devastated to learn that her trip was canceled because of the Muslim Ban.

*"My daughter is in a lot of pain. She's unable to express herself because of how much she's crying," Mohamed said. "I'm afraid she feels I abandoned her."* Hear more of their story and others by visiting: [bit.ly/MuslimBanStory](https://bit.ly/MuslimBanStory).



## ACTION

- Biden rescinded the Muslim Ban, but we must ensure that this discrimination never happens again. Sign this petition to urge the Senate to pass the NO BAN Act to prevent future presidents from banning people based on religion or nationality: [bit.ly/MANoBanAct](https://bit.ly/MANoBanAct)
- See and share the recording of our IIC “Prayers for Justice Peace in Black Immigrant Lives” event at this short link: <https://bit.ly/IICBHMVideo>

## PRAYER

*We pray that those who seek to make a home in this country may find us welcoming.*

*We pray that our legislators, as they craft immigration legislation, may find the wisdom and courage to enact new policies that do justice for our country and for those who immigrate here.*

*We pray that those who fan the flames of fear and discrimination against those who are undocumented may be touched with your divine compassion.*

*We pray in Jesus' name.*

*Amen.*

The Archdiocese of Chicago

## Love

*"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel... I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people... All from least to greatest shall know me..." Jeremiah 31:31-34*

### REFLECTION

What is this new covenant which Jeremiah foretells, this law that God will inscribe upon our hearts, this new way to which we are called? After generations of wandering and wondering, Jeremiah points to the fulfillment of the old covenant in the love of Jesus—the new covenant.

That is the covenant we are invited to embrace. **Love** is the law that is written upon our hearts. Today, the law of God, the law of love, requires that we turn our hearts away from all that separates us one from another—neocolonialism, white nationalism, racism, sexism, and all that perpetuates injustice and denies the essential dignity of all who are created in God's image; all that keeps us from being God's beloved community.

### STORY

Eduardo was an experienced truck driver in Honduras. During one fateful trip, his truck was stolen. Despite warnings, he filed a police report. In retaliation, the criminals found him at home and threatened him with violence. Eduardo and his wife, Kiara, decided to sell everything and flee the life they knew. By the time they reached Guatemala, Kiara was ill, which tempted them to return. Borrowing a phone, Eduardo called their neighbors only to learn that hours after they fled, their home was attacked in a drive-by shooting. *"That's when we knew we couldn't go back,"* Eduardo said.





*Story continued:*

Forced migration is a symptom of deeper issues, including endemic poverty, corruption, impunity, inequity, repression, and violence (often directly related to U.S. foreign policy), ill-conceived trade agreements, and the actions of U.S. corporate actors. Until we address the economic, social, environmental, and political conditions which compel migration, people like Eduardo and Kiara will continue to be forced to flee their homes.

Story from Justice for Immigrants.

## ACTION

We have a responsibility to ensure that our laws reflect God's covenant of love. Contact your members of Congress and ask them to support legislation that addresses the root causes of migration including:

- **The American Citizenship Act of 2021** provides assistance to Central American countries based on their ability to reduce the corruption, violence, and poverty that causes people to flee their home countries.
- **The Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act** suspends U.S. security assistance until human rights violations cease, perpetrators are brought to justice, and the rule of law is restored.
- **The Central American Women and Children Protection Act** provides assistance to increase protection for women and children in their communities and reduce female homicides, domestic violence, and sexual assault.

To contact your members of Congress, call (202) 224-3121. You can also find contact information for your Representative at [bit.ly/IICFindYourRep](https://bit.ly/IICFindYourRep) and for your Senators at [bit.ly/IICFindYourSenator](https://bit.ly/IICFindYourSenator).

## PRAYER

*God of compassion, you reveal the way to life  
through the path of obedience to your law.  
Inscribe your law of love upon our hearts,  
that in life we may follow your way and  
become more fully your beloved community.  
Amen.*

## Compassion

*“The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary.”  
Isaiah 50:4*

### REFLECTION

It is up to all of us to stand with our siblings who suffer injustice; to demonstrate **compassion** and speak out for change when others are silent.

### STORY

Despite promises to offer justice to black immigrants, the Administration has continued to deport thousands of Black immigrants—including those from Mauritania, Haiti, and Jamaica.

As Houleye Thiam, President of the Mauritanian Network for Human Rights in the U.S. (MNHRUS) stated, *“They are fleeing to survive, running from a country where Black people are oppressed, enslaved, denied citizenship, attacked, and killed simply for being Black.”*



Photo: Stand Up To Racism

## ACTION

- Engage in actions to promote justice for Black immigrants through our IIC Black Immigrants Take Action Toolkit: [bit.ly/BHMActions](https://bit.ly/BHMActions).
- Support Black immigrant-led organizations, such as MNHRUS, who fight for the rights of Black immigrants. Uplift their work and humbly ask how you can get involved, understanding that sometimes that may mean stepping back so other voices may come forward. Visit the following organizations' sites to learn more:
  - [mauritaniannetwork.org](https://mauritaniannetwork.org).
  - [haitianbridge.org](https://haitianbridge.org).
  - [undocublack.org](https://undocublack.org).
  - [blackimmigrantcollective.org](https://blackimmigrantcollective.org).
  - [baji.org](https://baji.org).
  - [facebook.com/CamAmerCouncil](https://facebook.com/CamAmerCouncil)

## PRAYER

*O God of all nations and peoples:  
We live in a nation of immigrants,  
and one in which the diverse gifts of many peoples  
have contributed to our energy and strength.*

*Yet it is a nation in which some immigrants  
are discriminated against  
because of the color of their skin,  
their language, or the country of their origin.*

*Help us, by your grace, to offer hospitality to all strangers,  
as our Father Abraham did in the desert.  
Grant us the wisdom and skill to enact just  
and merciful immigration reforms  
so that the hospitality and access to this great land  
may be offered equally to people  
of all colors and races and nations.*

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

## Unity

*"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."*  
Hebrews 4:15-16

### REFLECTION

The expansion of deterrence policies in recent years has created a myriad of harmful effects for immigrants and border communities. One of the most appalling of those effects has been family separations. Even after reunification, the trauma of separation lives on.

In the face of such unfathomable suffering, we can look to Jesus' life for both comfort and inspiration. On Good Friday, Jesus experienced the depths of human despair, suffering in body and soul as he felt alienated from God on the cross. Yet, even while dying, he offered compassion and care to his neighbor—the thief who hung next to him. May his example bring comfort to all who mourn and move us to stand in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors who remain alienated from their loved ones and scarred from the experience of family separation.

### STORY

"This all seems like it was a nightmare. My son cannot forget these horrible things... Being separated from my son was the most cruel thing I have ever experienced in my life. My son is always afraid, even now... It is something that we will never, never forget. They separated us without compassion... this trauma we faced is so hard..." I.V., a parent who survived family separation.

Hear more of their story and others at [bit.ly/IICCLINIC](https://bit.ly/IICCLINIC)



Photo: IIC

## ACTIONS

As the Biden administration works to remedy the impact of family separation, there are several steps that continue to need to be taken, including:

- Reuniting all families

See this compilation of [Immigration Priorities](#) for the Administration from faith and human rights organizations, including ways to ensure family unity by halting expulsions and restoring asylum protections.

## PRAYER

*Lord of everlasting grace and mercy,  
we pray to you for healing.  
May your presence provide comfort and hope  
to separated families, past and present.  
May your guidance be the foundation  
for a path forward.  
Help us alleviate the pain separation has caused.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.*



## *Boldness*

*"We are witnesses to all that Jesus did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem... how God raised him on the third day and made him manifest... to us who were chosen by God as witnesses... and he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify."*  
*Acts 10:39-42*

### REFLECTION

In the darkness of fear, we **boldly** profess the illuminating light of hope. Christ's triumph over death at Easter emboldens us to speak the truth in love and be prophetic witnesses. We are bold when we do not let fear ensnare us as we seek justice for the most vulnerable, including individuals, families, and children.

Since our current immigration laws have been rooted in racism for decades, deep and systemic changes will necessarily require bold action. Together with communities of faith, and led by directly-impacted Black and Brown immigrant leaders and organizations, we must boldly seek a pathway to citizenship for 11 million future Americans. The resurrection of Easter emboldens us to seek new life and permanent protections for those who've lost hope.

### STORY

"Claudia" has called the U.S. home for the last 20 years and her children are U.S. citizens. Despite this, and being a tax-paying essential worker, Claudia and her family didn't receive stimulus checks to cope with the hardship of COVID-19. *"We're working to help this country move forward. We deserve respect,"* Claudia says. Her story highlights the injustice of our immigration system and the need for reform. Hear more of her story at: [bit.ly/IICClaudiaStory](https://bit.ly/IICClaudiaStory)



## ACTION

- Join the We Are Home campaign in taking bold action for immigrant justice: [www.wearehome.us](http://www.wearehome.us)
- Learn more about the US Citizenship Act of 2021: [bit.ly/IICUSCA21](https://bit.ly/IICUSCA21)
- Keep contacting your legislators to share the stories you know of immigrant neighbors seeking citizenship.
- Watch for resources from the IIC about specific actions to take as faith partners--as we push for pathways to citizenship through the Build Back Better bill, through Executive Actions, and any other channels!

## PRAYER

*God of love and hope,  
you call us to venture  
beyond our comfort zones  
and to live boldly.  
Strengthen us to live  
our Baptismal call  
to prophetic witness to Christ.  
May we continue to share  
the hope and joy of Easter  
with those we accompany  
on their journey.  
Amen.*

# *Thank You*

Thank you for joining the Interfaith Immigration Coalition for Lent. We hope these devotions have provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the Lenten season, the hope of Easter, and the faith-based values that ground the work of immigration justice. As you've reflected, we hope you've been inspired to take action in solidarity with your immigrant neighbors.

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## STAY INVOLVED

- View additional religious resources from the IIC: [bit.ly/IICReligiousResources](https://bit.ly/IICReligiousResources)
- Sign up for the IIC email list to stay in the loop about future religious resources, advocacy opportunities, and the latest immigration news: [bit.ly/IICadvocacy](https://bit.ly/IICadvocacy)
- Follow the IIC on Facebook at [facebook.com/interfaithimmigrationcoalition](https://facebook.com/interfaithimmigrationcoalition) and on Twitter at [@interfaithimm](https://twitter.com/interfaithimm).