Immigration: An Initiative for Our Times

You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt.

— Exodus 23:9
# Table of Contents

A Note from the Justice Promoters ........................................................................................................... 1

How to Use This Booklet .......................................................................................................................... 2-6
   The Pastoral Circle ................................................................. 3-4
   Immigration Justice Initiative .............................................. 5
   Rationale .................................................................................. 6

Experience .................................................................................. 8-14
   The Stories of our Sisters and the Immigrants in their Lives .................. 9-11
   An Immigrant’s Story — “Maria’s Story” ..................................... 12-14

Social Analysis: Seek Truth ............................................................. 15-24
   History of U.S. Immigration .................................................. 16-17
   Countering the Myths ............................................................. 18-19
   The Human and Economic Implications of Immigration .................. 20-22
   Ways a Non-citizen May Become a Legal Permanent Resident ................. 23

Theological Reflection: Make Peace ........................................................................................................... 25-34
   Readings from Scripture ....................................................... 26-27
   From our Dominican Tradition .............................................. 28
   Theological Synthesis ............................................................. 29
   Solidarity and Right Relationships: The Church’s Call for Immigration Reform .... 29-31
   Vision of the Adrian Dominican Sisters .................................... 33

Planning for Action: Reverence Life ........................................................................................................ 35-40
   Advocacy: Utilizing Catholic Social Teaching .............................. 36-37
   Continuum of Action ............................................................... 38
   U.S. Detention Centers ............................................................. 39-40

Discerning Action ........................................................................ 40

General Resources ..................................................................... 42-48
   Glossary of Terms .................................................................... 42-43
   DVDs and Other Media Resources ........................................... 44
   Organizations ........................................................................... 45-46
   Prayer and Ritual ..................................................................... 47-48
Dear Sisters, Associates, and Friends,

We are pleased to present this booklet for study, prayer, and action on justice for immigrants. Over the past several months, the Justice Promoters of the Congregation have worked to compile the most succinct yet complete resources relative to this issue.

In April 2012, the Leadership Council of the Adrian Dominican Sisters affirmed the Immigration Justice Initiative found on page 5. This initiative — like the four Corporate Stances enacted by the Congregation on the Death Penalty, the War in Iraq, Nuclear Disarmament, and Human Trafficking — flow from our Mission, Vision, and Commitments. Justice for Immigrants is and has been at the forefront of public discourse. Establishing this issue as a justice initiative provides a platform for focused work by the Justice Promoters and the Congregation to address areas in need of urgent response, such as the proposals for more restrictive legislation at the state level.

Prayerful study and action in light of this initiative provide faithful response to our Vision “to challenge heresies of local and global domination, exploitation, and greed that privilege some, dehumanize others, and ravage Earth” (General Chapters 2004, 2010). Like the struggles for the civil rights of African Americans and women, the dignity, safety, and freedom from persecution of people who immigrate have come to the fore in the American Zeitgeist. The living God continues to call us to act on what is perhaps the civil rights issue of our times. As we work to answer the call, we pray for guidance and wisdom from Jesus, Mary, our brother Dominic, our sister Catherine of Siena, and all the saints.

This booklet is built on the Pastoral Circle of experience, analysis, reflection, and planning for action. We urge you to engage the material intentionally, prayerfully, and communally. It has been created through a representative process, and it belongs to all of us. We thank you for the many ways in which you advocate for justice for the common good.

In Christ’s living peace,
The Adrian Dominican Justice Promoters

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How to Use This Booklet

This immigration resource booklet uses the Pastoral Circle: a tool for going deeper, a process that begins with our experience and includes social analysis, theological reflection, and planning for action. The Pastoral Circle incorporates the Adrian Dominican Vision to Seek Truth, Make Peace, and Reverence Life.

We invite you to utilize this resource in your circles for personal reflection, in communal discussions, in ministry.

By personally and communally engaging in the Pastoral Circle, we will have the opportunity to act for just immigration reform from a position that has taken into account the experiential impact of our current immigration policy, social analysis of the issue, and theological reflection.

Each section contains a process to guide your discernment, with related resource materials. A Glossary of Terms and additional background information is provided in the General Resources section.
The Pastoral Circle recognizes that we participate in a circular pattern of experience, analysis, reflection, planning, and action. But it can be helpful to step back and take each of these integrated aspects of how we live and consider them one at a time.

The Pastoral Circle seeks to create the space in our lives to think about what we are doing, why we are doing it, how our faith helps provide context and direction for what we do, and decide what we will do from here.

Each of these stages can be dealt with as simply or in as complex a manner as we have time and energy to commit to it. The point is not to do things the “right” or “best” way, but to deepen, in whatever ways we can, our understanding of ourselves and our world.

**The first stage is experience.**
What has happened to me or someone else that I would like to consider more deeply?

**The second stage is social analysis, or what is really happening?**
What aspects of the social world in which the experience has taken place influenced what happened? This is obviously a complex question, and can never be fully answered. But a group can focus on the particular factors that seemed most important to the experience in order to catch the main influences. For example, you might ask some of the following questions about the experience:

- What did you notice about the situation? What are people experiencing?
- What influence does money have? What are the more important cultural values — why?
- What are the causes of the way things are — why?
- What do people want?
- What institutions have shaped the situation, for better or worse: Government? Church? Family? School? Corporations? Community Organizations? Others?
The third stage is theological reflection, or what does our faith have to say?

This step aims to help tap the Christian tradition to discern how you might feel called to respond to what you have discussed so far. Some of the questions you might consider include:

• What theological resources affected the person we are discussing: Scripture passages, Church teachings, lives of holy men and women, experience of prayer?
• Where did God seem present in the experience?
• What do we understand from Scripture about this situation?
• What ways in my or our own life (lives) might God be calling in response to this experience and analysis?

The fourth stage is planning for action, or what should we do in response?

This involves deciding what practical action you might take to live out the call you experience. It need not be something big. “Eliminating homelessness” or “stopping violence” probably won’t be accomplished by your discussion group! But many important things can be done at a local level. That’s, after all, where Jesus acted most: with and for the people right around him. Some questions you might ask to help with this stage of the circle include:

• How much energy do we have to give to whatever we do?
• What gifts do we have among us that can accomplish something we feel called to do?
• What is our realistic goal?
• What are the specific steps we need to carry out that goal?
• What is our timeline?
• How might my community, Mission Chapter, or Mission Group be involved?

Throughout the process of using the Pastoral Circle, you might find that each of the stages overlap and connect. Analysis leads to prayer, planning leads to theological reflection, new action leads back to analysis. But by remembering at some point in the process to at least touch on one stage, you’re likely to find an opening in which to hear God calling you to act with others toward a more just and peaceful world for all creation.

Produced by Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center based on Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J.
The Dominican Sisters of Adrian, Michigan, Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary, impelled by our Mission, Vision, and Commitments and the living of the Gospel, stand for justice for immigrants. We commit to work for immigration reform in our communities and our government until the civil rights struggle of our day is won.

The Adrian Dominicans call on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes reunification of families, and a path to citizenship for immigrants living in the United States who have not been convicted of criminal acts. Until this is achieved, we support a moratorium on deportations.

The Adrian Dominicans call for the repeal of restrictive state laws that attempt to supersede the federal government’s authority to regulate immigration. In particular, we call for an end to state legislation that criminalizes people with undocumented status; denies people basic human services; and creates a climate of fear in immigrant communities and in our country.

We commit to educate ourselves and others to the magnitude, causes and consequences of migration among the people of Earth wherever we are in mission throughout the world.

The Adrian Dominican Sisters, through the Office of Global Mission, Justice and Peace, and the ministries of the entire Congregation, in collaboration with other religious congregations, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, advocacy groups and nongovernmental organizations, will advocate for policies and programs that address the injustices and inequities faced by the immigrant within our legal systems and our society.

– Adrian Dominican Leadership Council, 2012
Rationale

We believe that:

• The Hebrew Scripture creates a precedent of welcoming the alien among us. “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt” (Leviticus 19:33-34).

• The state of immigration law enforcement is creating widows, widowers, and orphans. The prophet Isaiah gives clear instruction on caring for those who are marginalized: “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless and motherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17).

• Presently, the immigrant population is the most marginalized and persecuted demographic in the United States. In the Christian Scripture, Jesus outlines God’s option for people most in need: “Come, you who are blessed by my God; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation 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, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matthew 25:34-36).

• Every person is precious and people are more important than things. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.¹

• The Church has a pastoral responsibility to promote the human dignity of persons and to advocate for their liberation and economic, educational, and formative support. The Church must take up the defense of the legitimate rights of women, children, and men.²


²From International Meeting on the Pastoral Care of Women of the Street, Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant Peoples, 2005.
Experience

Social Analysis: Seek Truth

Theological Reflection: Make Peace

Planning for Action: Reverence Life
Experience

Gifts alone do not entice me; Parting does not discourage me; Poverty does not chase me; Jealousy does not prove my awareness; Madness does not evidence my presence.

Oh seekers, I am Truth, beseeching Truth; And your Truth in seeking and receiving And protecting me shall determine my Behavior.

– Khalil Gibran, excerpted from *Song of Love XXIV*

Prayer/Ritual

**Creating Sacred Space**

Prepare a sacred space with a cloth, a central candle, along with three votive candles. Add to this space any other object that calls to mind those who journey with us bearing the name “immigrant,” “stranger,” or “undocumented.”

Light the central candle as the sacred fire of the Holy One among us. In silence, with words of invocation, or with music, call into your space the presence of Christ among us.

**Reading I**

Khalil Gibran, *Song of Love*

**Reading II**

We commit to open our hearts to the other and deepen our understanding of diverse cultures and beliefs.

– *General Chapter 2010*

**Litany of Response**

**Spirit of Hope**

(*light a candle*)

Fill us with gracious hospitality to welcome to this land those who seek new life and freedom.

**Spirit of Compassion**

(*light a candle*)

Fill us with love strong enough to lift the burden of fear in our neighborhoods.

**Spirit of Truth**

(*light a candle*)

Fill us with knowledge and understanding to embrace the work entrusted to us.

**Blessing**

Come Wisdom,

Open our hearts and minds to hear the stories of those who live among us.

May we recognize that our stories are all a part of the great weaving of humanity drawing us into oneness with the sacred. Amen

Process

1. Prayer/Ritual
2. Read The Stories of Adrian Dominicans and the Immigrants in Their Lives.
3. Contemplate the reflection questions.
4. Read An Immigrant’s Story – “Maria’s Story.”
5. Contemplate the reflection questions.
6. Hold a discussion with a friend or group, exploring the Examen Question.
The Adrian Dominicans serve many communities in many ministries. The immigrant's story is interwoven with our story. This section focuses on the overlapping chapters of the Adrian Dominicans and the people with whom we walk, who wear the title of immigrant.

In the following stories, the names of the people and places have been changed for the safety of all involved and the integrity of the ministries.

From: Sister K.D.

My 18 years in Mexico with the poorest of poor give me a perspective about the realities of our immigration policy. I have been blessed to witness the reality of Immigration from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border.

Presently I work at a literacy center in the south of a major U.S. city, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to immigrants in the area. About 80 percent of our students are undocumented. At the center we are developing a Latina women’s support group. That is an honor!

I am also part of a pastoral team who visits at the county jail. We meet with those waiting for court dates or those who are anticipating their deportation. It is a moving experience. I am also part of a team who prays on the buses at another detention center in our area. The buses leave twice a week, deporting at least 80 people to Mexico and Central America. We are those U.S. citizens who give a final word of prayer, blessing, and pardon as the immigrants leave our country for no good reason except that they are poor, struggling, and have been picked up for their desire for a better life.

From: Sister R.L.

I have been serving in a parish, both as a pastoral associate and in the Hispanic ministry. As you might imagine, this has brought me into direct service of people who have migrated far from their homelands. My heart has been broken with their struggles, and made whole again with their hopes and triumphs.

One woman in my life lost her first and second husbands and her son to extreme violence. Her psychological struggles from the trauma have been immense. She tried to get asylum and really should have qualified, but her legal counsel messed up the case. She stayed in the United States and was happily married to a very good man with U.S. citizenship, but because she overstayed her time, she was picked up for deportation. Immigration gave her a month to get ready, which was a kindness. Her husband has health problems and needs her support. A very generous lawyer has been working on her case for well over a year, trying to get her a pardon so that her husband can sponsor her. The local Senator has intervened. This woman calls me from Guatemala regularly for reassurance and to pass messages on to her
lawyer. She is frightened back in Guatemala, and struggles to maintain hope.

I cherish the successes when they happen, and rely on them to sustain our community when hardships abound. A couple in the parish were undocumented for ten years in this country. Their son is also undocumented and graduated from high school. They were in great despair because they could not work or study. Both the husband and wife are very generous with their time at church, and have been a key couple in Hispanic Marriage Encounter. After they were picked up by Immigration, many people advocated for them and they ended up being granted permission to stay.

From: Sister R.J.

As a retired Sister I have the blessing of being able to participate in programs that were sometimes hard to work into my busy work life in hospitals. I’ve spent time at a non-profit camp that focuses on interfaith-based programming.

While attending one such program, I met a woman from Pakistan. With her husband and two children, she entered the United States as refugees approved by the U.S. State Department and the U.N. Allegations against her husband led to his five-year detention and deportation. The woman has twice been denied citizenship despite meeting all of the criteria.

From Sister E.M.

Although I don’t know the complete history, I know a student who hired a lawyer to straighten out his papers. He has a low-paying job and has saved the money for the lawyer and various fees over several years, only to find out that the lawyer has done nothing to help him. After hiring a new lawyer, he was denied asylum and is facing deportation. Now he continues to work with the new lawyer but has placed his family’s home up for sale and is making arrangements just in case he receives a deportation letter with a date.

From Associate R.E.

Several years ago, I was working as a temp. One of the other temps was a young woman from Guatemala. We got to know one another and she shared her story with me. When she was in Guatemala, the Army ruled. Her husband was in the military, and was abusive and violent. He knew that she was pregnant, yet he kicked her in the abdomen and threatened to kill her.

Before she left Guatemala, she told her friends she wanted to get a job here. They said she could only get a job cleaning houses or other menial work. She was undaunted. Her grasp of English was fair, but she needed more to be successful in her secretarial job. She carried a Spanish-English dictionary with her and referred to it often. She obtained a visa and came to Chicago to visit her aunt. She stayed, fearful of returning home. She knew her husband was capable of carrying out his threat. Her son was born here. She cared for him and worked full-time.

When my friend would speak of her mother, her eyes filled with tears. She told me she would never see her again. She was very much aware of being undocumented and worried about that, too. I asked if she would like to talk to someone I knew, a Catholic sister who had experience in this area. At first, she declined, saying she didn’t want to bother her. I assured her this sister wouldn’t mind. They talked. (My friend told me it was a difficult situation because of her lack of papers.)

The company where we met hired her as a permanent secretary. I was
assigned to a new organization. I wonder what happened to her.

**From: Sister J.C.**

Last Fall, we members of the student parish in town were informed that one of our parishioners had been visited by immigration authorities and warned that she was to be deported back to Mexico on December 27.

She and her husband had come to the United States about 14 years ago. They were undocumented, but not illegal. They had working papers and had applied for a visa. They were assured that they would receive a visa within two years. However, it never arrived.

The couple had three children who, of course, were American citizens. The parents were both employed, paid taxes, owned their own home, and were active in the parish. The children were all in school and were good students.

About a year earlier, immigration authorities had come to the house, removed the husband, and deported him. Members of the parish were unaware of this and so took no action at the time.

The woman and children did the best they could to go on with their lives, but the loss of the presence of their husband/father was a terrible trauma. The children began to manifest signs of stress and their school work began to suffer.

Months later, the mother was taken from the home by the police and was imprisoned for several days. She was eventually released, but was warned of impending deportation.

At this point, the parish and the community got involved. There was a ground swell of support for the family. A prayer vigil was held in the parish, followed by a march of protest, and a large circulation of petitions. Literally hundreds of parishioners and neighbors wrote to legislators, to the Department of Homeland Security, and to any other contact that might be able to influence this case.

Many members of the parish contacted other public figures whom they thought could help (with us, it was the Adrian Dominican Sisters) who also wrote letters and pleaded the family’s cause.

Months went by and no response came from authorities. As Christmas came closer, the parish Social Justice Promoter was making plans to take the woman to the airport and comfort the children.

Then, just a short time before the day of departure, the woman was contacted and informed that she had received a stay of another year. All of us involved breathed a sigh of relief and a prayer of gratitude for this vulnerable little family.

The hope is that by next year, Immigration will be implementing the President’s directive to give priority to deporting those with criminal records, not innocent people who desire to become law-abiding citizens and make a contribution to society.

However, the case is not settled. We at the parish hope and pray that such violent treatment will not be repeated.

**Reflection Questions on the Stories of the Adrian Dominicans**

**Reflection Question 1:** What breaks my heart or gives me hope as I read these stories?

**Reflection Question 2:** What have my encounters with people who migrate called forth in me?
An Immigrant’s Story

To leave one’s home — to leave friends, family, and the land that has given life — is a harrowing task. Take time to read one woman’s story and the many obstacles she encountered.

“Maria’s Story”
by Franky Stebbins

Maria has lived in Chicago since 1977 — 30 years. Her story first appeared in the Winter 2007 issue of Centerings, the newsletter of the 8th Day Center for Justice. Maria was interviewed by Franky Stebbins, a graduate student in Social Justice at Loyola University and a leader in Epiphany Parish. It is reprinted here with permission.

The Crossing

....When I came walking my son got sick. We were in the desert on the border and all night he had a fever. There was no one there who I could ask for help. I wanted to turn back, and forget about it. It is very difficult when your child is sick and you cannot ease his pain. In the morning, the person who was to help me cross the border helped me get some medicine for my son’s ear infection. I still wanted to go back to Mexico.

Then we were in the airport at El Paso. My son was following these men. It had been awhile since he had seen his father, so he thought these men were possibly his dad. He started calling to them, “Papa, Papa!” So these two men turned to look at my little boy. They were immigration officers. They looked to see who the boy was traveling with and realized it was me. I was detained. My son was hungry. There was only soda and I didn’t have any water to give him. It was horrible. Horrible.

But, one has to continue. When the officials saw that I didn’t have any food for my son they bought him a sandwich and let us go. One of them advised me that I should return to Mexico and not try to cross. He stated that it was very difficult for a woman with a child to make it.

I phoned my husband in Chicago. We discussed our choices and he urged me to try again. I agreed since I was already there on the border. And so I tried again and I made it across.

My husband came to the United States in September 1976. I came in February 1977. After this we were okay for a few years. Then I was arrested at work with another woman, handcuffed, detained for five hours, and released. Then my husband and I hired an attorney.
I received a letter from Immigration to appear at their offices. I called my attorney and let him know about the letter. He told me not to worry about it. This happened several more times and each time...he told me not to worry. Then I received a “date for deportation notice” in the mail. It was an appointment for me to appear in court before a judge. I called the attorney again. He said that everything would be fine...that he would file for a suspension of deportation. I asked him what I should do. Should I pack a suitcase? Do I need to make arrangements for my children? He told me not to worry, that he, too, was going to be there for my court date and that it would be fine. When I arrived, the attorney wasn’t there. There was a van outside waiting to take me to the airport. I didn’t know what to do.... I had $50. I was handcuffed and put inside the van and taken to the airport. In the terminal I saw a pay phone and requested to make a call to my house to let them know what was happening. They uncuffed me so I could call. All I could say to my family was that I was being deported. I didn’t have any money and I did not know where they were taking me.

I was taken to Brownsville, Texas. Never again do I want to hear the name of that town! Arriving back on the border is a difficult thing. I was taken to the immigration office; they took down all of my information and told me to go. I asked: “Where should I go? I don’t know anyone here.” They told me to cross the bridge — that Mexico was on the other side...I was scared.

Luckily there were two other gentlemen who were deported with me. If it wasn’t for them I don’t know what I would have done. They suggested that I get a room in the hotel on the Mexican side of the border and make plans with my family. I explained that I did not have enough money.

This time when I crossed I was the only woman in a group of men. Thank God they all treated me like I was part of their family. We came in a car; the car broke down. We were on the freeway in the middle of nowhere, not near any place where we could get help. Thankfully, these men were able to fix the car. All I can tell you is that I have no idea where we crossed, no idea.

They left me at a bus terminal and purchased my ticket for me to arrive here in Chicago. It was four days for me to come from the border to Chicago. I lost my job when I came back. I looked and looked for work. Some places were too far, or too unsafe. Others paid too little. That is when I decided to stay home with my children. Everything else has been frustrating because I want a good job to have money to feed my family, but I can’t find one.

Then came the amnesty. I had these big illusions of applying for my residency. I went to various places that said I could not apply because of my deportation. I know people whose records were worse than mine and were able to apply; but every place I went, I was told not to apply. The time arrived when my daughter who was born here turned 21 and applied for me. It was a slow process — two years without getting an appointment for my fingerprints. Finally, they took my fingerprints. Then I had to go back so that they could take them again.
Residency Denied

I went to the interview. I was asked if I’d ever been arrested. I told them the truth, that yes I had been arrested and deported. They asked me the date. They were unable to find a record on me for that date. They told me that I should pay the $1,000 fine and that they would contact my daughter. I paid the fine and waited to hear from them. Two years passed. In February 2005, I received a letter denying my petition because I had been deported.

Today

Today I am scared to go out and get the mail. It worries me, the situation that we are living in right now. Some people look at us with distrust. It bothers me a little bit. I understand that some undocumented people have done something wrong — but not all of us. Today I am here. I do not know if I will be tomorrow. I don’t know. I hope in God that there is a solution for people like myself.

Some people make me feel like a criminal. The only thing that I have done is to make a better life for my family. This has been my only crime. I am conscious of the laws of this country. But I want to know what any other woman would do to be back with her children. I want you to understand that we did not come here to take jobs from people. Really, we came here to take jobs which many people are too well-trained for and cannot do. Also it is not true that we are taking public benefits. I have never used benefits. Three of my children attended private schools. I believe that we are contributing more than we are taking away.

Reflection Questions on An Immigrant’s Story

Reflection Question 1: When reading “Maria’s Story,” what made me feel the most compassionate?

Reflection Question 2: What in “Maria’s Story” would I like to make sure no one has to face again?

Examen Question

What are my/our concerns and questions about Immigration?

Write down your answer, and revisit it, as you spend time in other sections of this book.

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Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles.
From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!"
cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

_The New Colossus_
– Emma Lazarus, 1883

Engraved on a bronze plaque and mounted inside the lower level of the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

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Process

1. Prayer/Ritual
2. Study the History and Myths of Immigration.
3. Contemplate the reflection questions.
4. Study “The Human and Economic Implications of Immigration.”
5. Study the ways in which a non-citizen may become a legal permanent resident (p.23).
6. Contemplate the reflection questions.
7. Hold a discussion with a friend or group, exploring the Examen Question.

Prayer/Ritual

_Creating Sacred Space_

Prepare a sacred space with a cloth, a central candle along with three votive candles. Add to this space any other object that calls to mind those who journey with us bearing the name “immigrant,” “stranger,” or “undocumented.”

Light the central candle as the sacred fire of the Holy One among us. In silence, with words of invocation, or with music, call into your space the presence of Christ among us.

Reading I

Emma Lazarus, _The New Colossus_

Reading II

We walk in solidarity with people who are poor and challenge structures that impoverish them. (General Chapter 2004-2010)

Litany of Response

Spirit of Wisdom
(light a candle)
Open our minds and hearts to recognize the truth we seek.

Spirit of Our Ancestors
(light a candle)
Remind us of your journey to this land so that we may embrace those who come today with open arms.

Spirit of Love
(light a candle)
Open our eyes, our ears, and our hearts and enliven our passion for justice as we seek a right path for our country and all people.

Blessing

Come Wisdom,
Open our hearts and minds to discern from our history and tradition a path of justice and truth.
Amen.
Immigration: History and Myths

It is undeniable that immigration is one of the most critical social issues of the day. But how did we get here? Most U.S. citizens will recognize our history as an immigrant nation. However, questions arise, such as, “Why don’t they come here legally?” Take time to learn the history and the myths of immigration in the United States by reading the following resources, which show how those who migrate face an ever-changing legal system. The stereotypes of the immigrant have been consistent.

History of U.S. Immigration

1492-1874
Immigration Unrestricted

- 1492 – By the time Christopher Columbus landed, anywhere from 2 million to 10 million Native Americans had migrated.
- 1819 – Immigration data collection begins. From the 1840’s to the 1860’s, approximately 6.6 million immigrants arrived in the United States.

1875-1920
Exclusion Laws and Centralized Control of Immigration

- 1875 – Criminals, prostitutes and Chinese contract laborers are excluded.
- 1891 – The Bureau of Immigration is created.
- 1917 – Immigration from Asian Pacific countries is prohibited.

1921-1964
National-Origins Quota System and End of Anti-Asian Exclusion

- 1921 – A national-origins quota system begins favoring Northwestern Europeans.
- 1929 – The Registry Act allows immigrants who arrived before 1921 to register retroactively.
- 1942 – The Bracero program brings 5 million Mexican temporary field workers into the United States.
- 1948 – The Displaced Persons Act provides admission for Baltic and Ukranian refugees.
- 1954 – Operation Wetback deports 1 million Mexican immigrants.

1965-1985
End of National-Origins Quota System and Creation of Refugee Resettlement

- 1965 – Immigration and Nationality Act abolishes discriminatory quota system and organized immigration law.
1986-2000
Rising Immigration Control and Limiting Immigrant Rights

- 1986 – The Immigration Reform and Control Act allows undocumented residents to apply for legal status and creates employer sanctions against hiring undocumented immigrants.
- 1990 – Immigrant Investor Program encourages U.S. businesses to hire skilled foreign workers, favoring educational, professional, or financial contributions.
- 1997-2000 – A new Congress mitigates some of the overly harsh restrictions.

2001-Present
Immigration Control Linked to National Security

USA Patriot Act expands authority to detain, prosecute, and remove aliens suspected of terrorism and establishes new regulations that target non-citizens, expand detention, and restrict immigration appeals. The refugee resettlement system is temporarily halted while the new security procedures are implemented.

- 2005 – The Real ID Act requires proof of citizenship or legal immigrant status to obtain driving license.
- 2006 – The Secure Fence Act calls for the building of an additional 850 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border.¹
- 2010-2011 – Over 150 restrictive immigration state laws are passed, most notably Arizona S.B. 1070.²

¹Source: Immigration Policy Center, www.immigrationpolicy.org
Countering the Myths

**Immigrants don’t want to learn English.**

**FALSE**

The development of English proficiency among non-English speaking immigrants today mirrors that of 19th and early 20th century immigration, when masses of Italian, German, and Eastern European immigrants came to America. While first generation, non-English speaking immigrants predictably have lower rates of English proficiency than native speakers, 91 percent of second generation immigrants are fluent or near fluent English speakers. By the third generation, 97 percent speak English fluently or nearly fluently.\(^1\)


**Immigrants don’t pay taxes.**

**FALSE**

Undocumented immigrants pay taxes. Between one half and three-quarters of undocumented immigrants pay state and federal taxes. They also contribute to Medicare and provide as much as $7 billion a year to the Social Security Fund. Further, undocumented workers pay sales taxes where applicable as well as property taxes — directly if they own and indirectly if they rent.\(^2\)

**Immigrants increase the crime rate.**

**FALSE**

Recent research has shown that immigrant communities do not increase the crime rate and that immigrants commit fewer crimes than native-born Americans. While the undocumented immigrant population doubled from 1994 to 2005, violent crime dropped by 34 percent and property crimes decreased by 32 percent. Furthermore, Harvard sociologist Robert Sampson has found that first-generation immigrants are 45 percent less likely to commit violent crimes than Americanized, third-generation immigrants.\(^3\)

**Immigrants take jobs away from Americans.**

**FALSE**

A recent study produced by the Pew Hispanic Center reveals that “rapid increases in the foreign-born population at the state level are not associated with negative effects on the employment of native-born workers.” In fact, given that the number of native born low-wage earners is falling nationally, immigrants are playing an important role in offsetting that decline. The Urban Institute reports that from 2000 to 2005, the number of low-wage workers declined by approximately 1.8
Immigrants are a drain on the United States economy.

FALSE

The immigrant community is not a drain on the U.S. economy but, in fact, proves to be a net benefit. Research reported by both the CATO Institute and the President’s Council of Economic Advisors reveals that the average immigrant pays a net $80,000 more in taxes than they collect in government services. For immigrants with college degrees the net fiscal return is $198,000. Furthermore, the American Farm Bureau asserts that without guest workers the U.S. economy would lose as much as $9 billion a year in agricultural production and 20 percent of current production would go overseas.\(^5\)

Undocumented immigrants are a burden on the healthcare system.

FALSE

Federal, state, and local governments spend approximately $1.1 billion annually on health care costs for undocumented immigrants, aged 18 to 64, or approximately $11 in taxes for each U.S. household. This compares to $88 billion spent on all health care for non-elderly adults in the U.S. in 2000. Foreign-born individuals tend to use fewer health care services because they are relatively healthier than their native-born counterparts. For example, in Los Angeles County, “total medical spending on undocumented immigrants was $887 million in 2000 — 6 percent of total costs, although undocumented immigrants comprise 12 percent of the region’s residents.”

Reflection Questions on Immigration History and Myths

Reflection Question 1:
What was I not aware of in the history of immigration?

Reflection Question 2:
What myths were dispelled for me?

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The Human and Economic Implications of Immigration

With a basic understanding of the history of immigration, and having dispelled some of the common myths, study the social impact of immigration and immigration policy. Focus on both the basic dignity of each person, and the common good.

**Immigrants tend to complement the native workforce, rather than compete with it.**

- The percentage of Americans without a high school diploma has fallen from 50 percent in the 1960’s to 7 percent today — and immigrants are filling the jobs vacated by increasingly educated Americans.¹
- Unemployment in border states has remained below the national average despite high levels of immigration.²
- Studies show that legalization would likely improve wages for all workers.³

**Immigrants contribute mightily to the Social Security System.**

- Studies show that unauthorized immigrants provide a net gain of $7 billion to the Social Security system each year. The Social Security Administration also credits these workers for paying an additional $520 billion under mismatching Social Security numbers.⁴

**Immigrants boost state revenues.**

- Reports from several states such as Texas show that unauthorized immigrants contribute as much as $1.5 billion to state revenues.⁵ Legalization would force unscrupulous employers to contribute payroll taxes for their immigrant workers and thus further increase state revenues.


²See fn. 1.

³Raul Hinojosa Ojed, “Comprehensive Migration Policy Reform in North America: The Key to Sustainable and Equitable Economic Integration,” Los Angeles, California: North American Integration and Development Center, School of Policy and Social Research, UCLA, August 2000.

⁴Testimony of Patrick P. O’Carroll, Jr., Inspector General of the Social Security Administration, before the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, “Administrative Challenges Facing the Social Security Administration,” March 14, 2006.

Immigrant workers help to produce lower-cost goods for U.S. consumers.

- Many unauthorized immigrants are low-wage employees whose hard work helps produce more affordable goods for all U.S. consumers. Deporting these workers will lead to labor shortages that will increase the costs of U.S. goods.

Immigrants are consumers, too.

- Immigrants are also consumers, which increases demand for the goods and services of U.S. industries.6

Immigrant workers fill critical shortages in key U.S. industries.

- The Department of Labor forecasts employee shortages in agriculture, construction, and service work, sectors filled largely by immigrants.7

Immigrants are needed to grow the tax base for an aging workforce.

- Immigrants are needed to grow the labor force to support the retiring generation.8

Immigrant workers are suffering alongside native workers during this recession.

- Growth in the foreign-born population began slowing following the onset of the 2007 recession.9

- Immigrant workers are just as vulnerable during recessions as native workers due to their lower levels of skill and education, their relative youth, and their over-representation in the most vulnerable U.S. industries.10

- Unemployment rates for foreign-born Latinos have exceeded that of non-Hispanic workers during the current recession.11

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10See fn.9.

Has the slowing economy increased the return of migrants to their home countries?

- Scholars have suggested for decades that migrants’ (particularly undocumented migrants’) decisions to return to their home country depends more on the conditions in the home country than those of the receiving country. This is one reason that development of sending countries is a critical pillar of comprehensive immigration reform.

- “Anecdotal evidence suggests that return migration to some countries, including Mexico, appears to have increased in the last two years; however, data do not yet substantiate these reports. As a result, there is no definitive trend so far that can be tied in a significant way to the US economic conditions. Some observers’ attempts to tie immigrants’ returns (other than removals) to the substantial increase in interior immigration enforcement appear to be premature.”

How has the recession impacted immigrants?

- Non-citizen immigrants are much more vulnerable to fluctuations in the economy. The median annual income of non-citizen immigrant households fell 7.3 percent from 2006 to 2007. In contrast, the median annual income of all U.S. households increased 1.3 percent during the same period.


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Ways a Non-citizen May Become a Legal Permanent Resident

The Options:

Family-based Method

U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents can file petitions that will lead to certain close relatives being granted an immigrant visa, which will allow the relative to apply for legal permanent residence.

Employment-based Method

A U.S. employer may petition for a necessary skilled worker. The employer must first go through a process with the Department of Labor in which the employer establishes that there is no U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident available to fill the position being offered.

Asylum

A person who can establish that s/he has a credible fear of being persecuted in her/his home country for reasons covered by one of five protected areas may be granted asylum and become a legal permanent resident.

Five Protected Areas

- Race
- Religion
- Nationality
- Political Opinion
- Membership in a particular social group

Cancellation of Removal

A very limited defense of deportation for undocumented immigrants who are already in deportation proceedings. If granted, this allows application for Legal Permanent Residence (LPR). The person must establish that he or she:

- Has been in the United States continuously for ten years
- Has shown good moral character for that time period
- Can prove extreme and unusual hardship to a U.S. citizen, LPR spouse, parent, or child

Diversity Lottery

This is designed to allow immigration from countries that the U.S. State Department feels are underrepresented. Individuals from the designated countries may apply to enter. These individuals must demonstrate the equivalent of a high school education or two years of experience in a job that requires two years of training.

Other Special Categories

- Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central America Relief Act for Guatemalans and Salvadorans (NACARA 203) — must show entrance to the United States by 1990
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) — non-resident abused spouses of legal permanent residents or U.S. citizens may self-petition to obtain Legal Permanent Residence
- Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) — must show neglect, abuse, or abandonment by a parent
- T Visa — for undocumented persons who are victims of trafficking
- U Visa — for undocumented persons who are victims of certain criminal activity
Reflection Questions

**Reflection Question 1:**
Consider one of the following questions regarding the social analysis section:

- What did you notice about the situation? What are people experiencing?
- What influence does money have? What are the more important cultural values — why?
- What are the causes of the way things are — why?
- What do people who immigrate want?
- What institutions have shaped the situation, for better or worse: Government? Church? Family? School? Corporations? Community Organizations? Others?

**Reflection Question 2:**
How do I/we benefit from the current immigration policies? How could I/we benefit with a different set of policies?

Examen Question

Considering the legacy of immigration and the misunderstanding around it, where do I see opportunity to reform today’s system to be just?
For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

And the king will say to them in reply, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me.”

– Matthew 25:35-36, 40

Process
1. Prayer/Ritual
2. Read the selections from Scripture.
3. Read the passage from our Dominican Tradition.
4. Contemplate the reflection questions.
5. Read Solidarity and Right Relationship: The Church’s Call for Immigration Reform.
6. Contemplate the reflection questions.
7. Pray with the Vision of the Adrian Dominican Sisters.
8. Contemplate the reflection questions.
9. Hold a discussion with a friend or group, exploring the Examen Question.

Prayer/Ritual
Creating Sacred Space
Prepare a sacred space with a cloth, a central candle, along with three votive candles. Add to this space any other object that calls to mind those who journey with us bearing the name “immigrant,” “stranger,” or “undocumented.”

Light the central candle as the sacred fire of the Holy One among us. In silence, with words of invocation, or with music, call into your space the presence of Christ among us.

Reading I
Matthew 25:35-40

Reading II
We practice non-violent peacemaking…
We live right relationships with Earth community.

Litany of Response
Spirit of Fire
(light a candle)
Set our hearts on fire that we may live as prophetic witnesses to your love.

Spirit of Mercy
(light a candle)
Live in us that we may respond to our brothers and sisters in need.

Spirit of Right Relationships
(light a candle)
Soften our hearts that we may be transformed in ways as yet unknown.

Blessing
Come Wisdom,
Open our hearts and minds so that we may listen to your word dwelling among us.
May we recognize your voice and live as partners with you in the creation of a world rich in justice and peace. Amen.

Theological Reflection: Make Peace
Readings from Scripture

Because our lives are rooted in the Scriptures, reflect on the passages from the Hebrew and Christian texts and how they apply to compassionate and just immigration reform today.

**Immigrants in the Hebrew Scriptures**

**Exodus 23:9**

You shall not oppress a resident alien; you well know how it feels to be an alien, since you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.

**Leviticus 19:33-34**

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the Lord, am your God.

**Tobit 4:7**

Give alms from your possessions. Do not turn your face away from any of the poor, so that God’s face will not be turned away from you.

**Psalm 82:2-4**

How long will you judge unjustly and favor the cause of the wicked? Defend the lowly and fatherless; render justice to the afflicted and needy. Rescue the lowly and poor; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

**Psalm 103:6**

The Lord does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed.

**Sirach 4:8-9**

Give a hearing to the poor, and return their greeting with deference. Deliver the oppressed from their oppressors; right judgment should not be repugnant to you.

**Isaiah 10:1-2**

Ah! [Woe to] Those who enact unjust statutes, who write oppressive decrees, depriving the needy of judgment, robbing my people’s poor of justice, making widows their plunder, and orphans their prey!

**Isaiah 61:1-2**

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; He has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord and a day of vindication by our God.

Translations from *The New American Bible, Revised Edition* (NABRE)
Jeremiah 22:3
Thus says the Lord: Do what is right and just. Rescue the victims from the hand of their oppressors. Do not wrong or oppress the resident alien, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place.

Proverbs 31:8-9
Open your mouth in behalf of the mute, and for the rights of the destitute; open your mouth, judge justly, defend the needy and the poor!

Micah 6:8
You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

Zechariah 7:8-10
The word of the Lord came to Zechariah: thus says the Lord of hosts: judge with true justice, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the resident alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts.

Immigrants in the Christian Scriptures
Matthew 25:35-36, 40
For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.

...Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me.

Mark 12:29-31
The first [commandment] is... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

Luke 4:18-19
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Galatians 3:28
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:5-8
Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Colossians 3:12
Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

1 John 4:20-21
If anyone says, “I love God,” but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.
As Dominicans we connect to a long tradition of advocacy on behalf of human dignity. In 2011 we commemorated the 500th anniversary of the homily composed in Hispaniola by the Dominican community and delivered by Fray Antonio Montesinos. Noted as the first act of human rights advocacy in the new world, the homily was addressed to the Spanish Conquistadors regarding their treatment of the indigenous slaves (referred to in the homily as Indians):

...By what right and by what justice do you hold these Indians in such a cruel and horrible servitude? With what authority have you carried out such detestable wars against these people who were living in their meek and peaceful lands that you have consumed with deaths and ravages never heard of? How can you hold these peoples so oppressed and exhausted by not giving to them the food they need to eat, and by not healing their illnesses which are due to the excessive works you force upon them? Thus they die, or — better said — you kill them in order to acquire the precious gold every day! Do you care at all about letting them know God as their Creator... and fulfill their Sunday obligation? Are these people not human beings? Don’t they have rational souls? Are you not obliged to love them as you love yourselves?

Reflection Questions

1. Is the relationship between the Conquistadors and the indigenous slave comparable to the relationship between people of the United States and people who immigrate? Why or Why not?

2. As a Dominican, what does our prophetic charism call us to voice?
“Solidarity and Right Relationships: The Church’s call for Immigration Reform”

by Jill Marie Gerschutz Bell

Several years ago, a college senior told me that she disagreed with the Church’s stance on immigration. I encouraged her to continue reading and discerning. A few months later, the young woman emailed to ask what she could do to promote immigration reform. “I just found out that Juana is undocumented; I’ve worked with her for more than a year now in my community service work, and I just know that if there were a way for her to be here legally, she would have taken it. Please, tell me what I can do for Juana.”

This thoughtful student’s position on immigration shifted completely as a result of her relationship with one undocumented woman. How many people of good faith have, because of one transformative relationship, sought to confront injustice? In the case of our outdated immigration system, this push for change is based upon a relationship in which the U.S. citizen wants to see his or her friend live in dignity as a full participant in American society, protected from our often draconian enforcement policies.

The Vision of Catholic Social Teaching

Rather than emphasizing national security and economic cost-benefits in the U.S. immigration debate, Catholic Social Teaching (CST) emphasizes human dignity and the common good. Practicing authentic development, participation, good stewardship, economic justice, subsidiarity and solidarity as a church will bring us closer to God’s Kingdom. Given the many competing tensions between the common good and individual needs, between justice and law, what are the just relationships between newcomers and our communities? What do we owe one another, not only to avoid doing harm, but also as co-creators in God’s kingdom? What are the implications of this for our government’s policies and our own community life?
The Church calls upon communities to aspire to conditions in which all people can thrive and become the people God called them to be. John Paul II asserted in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that “authentic development” is well-rounded. On a personal level, authentic development would provide everything one needs to become the person God intended them to become. CST further asserts that people have the right to migrate — or not to migrate — in search of authentic development. It respects the right of a government to protect its borders and calls upon governments to protect their people because laws intend to protect human dignity and the common good.

The concept of authentic development applies to those of us in the developed world as much as those in the developing world. John Paul II noted that solidarity enables us to overcome not only the dehumanizing underdevelopment from which many migrants flee, but also the “overdevelopment which tends to reduce the person to an economic unit in an ever more oppressive consumer network.” Applying this exhortation to our immigration policies would require a significant rethinking of trade, enforcement, our visa system and our basic economic structures.

U.S. trade policies, especially the North American Free Trade Agreement, have spurred migration to the United States because small scale farmers in Mexico cannot compete with U.S. agri-business. A trade policy that acknowledges that the economy exists for the people, not the other way around, as CST reminds us, would seek to protect workers at home and abroad.

This reality of globalization, combined with the dearth of visas for unskilled workers, compels many migrants seeking work or family unification to risk the dangerous three-day trek through the Sonoran desert. This abomination would be significantly mitigated by a more generous visa system that more accurately reflects the U.S. economic reality. Before the current economic recession, as many as 500,000 additional workers annually in the United States were gainfully employed but without documentation.

The significant contributions of migrants — whether in construction, agriculture, hospitality or the service industries — are often welcomed by employers and consumers alike. An authentic development for the United States would acknowledge the significant contributions of migrants and would foster undocumented migrants’ full participation in all other aspects of life: cultural, civil, political and social. A path to legal work for future workers and a path to legalization for the undocumented would right the relationship between workers and the United States.

Despite all that migrants have contributed, the prevailing public opinion suggests that Americans eschew them. Complaints about migrants using public services not only miss the point that migrants do pay for these services through taxes, but also that good stewardship calls us to be generous with God’s gifts to our nation. The increasingly vitriolic debate has furthered anti-immigrant policies in dozens of states and increased deportations by the Obama and Bush administrations.

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Migrants are the face of globalization today. As host communities, we have three options for our relationships with newcomers: xenophobia and exclusion; marginalization and discrimination; or solidarity and integration. The Church played a critical role in the integration of Catholic migrants in past generations and has the opportunity to do so again today.

**The Church’s Response**

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and more than one dozen other national Catholic agencies have sought since 2005 to improve U.S. immigration policies through the Justice for Immigrants campaign. CST considers migration from the perspective of God’s one human family. But until we as Church live as that family in solidarity, our prophetic words will continue to fall on deaf ears.

Do we share a vision for a Church that facilitates right relationships between native-born and migrants? In Biblical times, hospitality was considered a virtue. Henri Nouwen offered a particularly appropriate perspective of right relationships that emphasizes participation and subsidiarity:

*Hospitality is not to change people but to offer space where change can take place. To convert hostility to hospitality requires the creation of the friendly empty space where we can reach out to our fellow human beings and invite them to a new relationship. The paradox indeed is that hospitality asks for the creation of an empty space where the guest can find his own soul.*

Do we strive for this hospitality today? It will only be through personal relationships of solidarity that our policies change. Rev. Shay Auerbach, SJ, has noted that when he became pastor of a multicultural parish in Raleigh, North Carolina, he began to facilitate ownership by keeping the Spanish version of the texts in the pews alongside the English version. At Jesuit High School in Portland, Oregon, students offer English as a Second Language courses to the physical plant staff and others in their community. This kind of integration assistance also creates community, helps students to give back, and exposes them to migrants’ reality.

Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, an outspoken advocate of a more just immigration policy, upholds the Trinity as a model of integration. Reflecting “unity in diversity,” the Trinity appreciates the unique gifts of all three unique members. Now is the time for us as Church to welcome creative new gifts to our corporate body as we negotiate the 21st century.


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Reflection Questions on “Solidarity and Right Relationship: The Church’s Call for Immigration Reform”

1. In her opening paragraphs, the author describes a conversion experience of one of her students, then proposes the question: “How many people of good faith have, because of one transformative relationship, sought to confront injustice?” What was a relationship that transformed me, through which I became a justice advocate?

2. The author next asks three questions based on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, addressing each:

   a. Given the many competing tensions between the common good and individual needs, between justice and law, what are the just relationships between newcomers and our communities?

   b. What do we owe one another, not only to avoid doing harm, but also as co-creators in God’s kingdom?

   c. What are the implications of this for our government’s policies and our own community life?

Which question(s), and which answer(s) most strongly represent my key concerns and values of Catholic Social Teaching?

3. The core question the author asks at the end of her article is, “Do we share a vision for a Church that facilitates right relationships between native-born and migrants?” As the author elaborates on the response, she emphasizes that our policies change only through personal relationships of solidarity. With whom am I creating personal relationships of solidarity?
Vision of the Adrian Dominican Sisters

The Vision of the Congregation is one of the guiding forces behind all of our ministries. Spend a few moments with our Vision, and then contemplate the questions below.

We Dominican Preachers of Adrian impelled by the Gospel and outraged by the injustices of our day seek truth; make peace; reverence life.

Stirred by the Wisdom of God and rooted in our contemplative prayer, communal study and life in community, we challenge heresies of local and global domination, exploitation, and greed that privilege some, dehumanize others, and ravage Earth.

We confront our racist attitudes and root out racist practices in our lives and systems.

We confront systems where women are denied freedom, equality, and full personhood.

We walk in solidarity with people who are poor and challenge structures that impoverish them.

We practice non-violent peacemaking.

We promote lay leadership and shared decision-making for a renewed Church.

We live right relationships with Earth community.

We claim the communal authority and responsibility of our Dominican heritage.

We commit ourselves to live this vision.

– General Chapter of 2004
Affirmed by General Chapter of 2010
Reflection Questions on the Vision of the Adrian Dominican Sisters

Reflection Question 1:
As I consider our Vision in relation to the issue of immigration, what new truths emerge for me?

Reflection Question 2:
What are the connections or themes that I/we see among the Scriptures, our Dominican heritage, Catholic Social Teaching, and the Vision of the Congregation?

Examen Question
What are the Gospel imperatives for me/the Congregation?
O Mother of the Americas,
You came
On a dark hill in a dark time
To one who had no documentation.
To the challenge of the authorities,
You offered roses and grace.

You wanted a space,
Simple and extraordinary,
A space where all could worship
Together, equally your children.

You call us again
In this dark time
To create a space
Where all your children
Are welcomed,
Cherished,
Offered bread, roses,
and what grace we can gather.

O Lady, still shining,
Madre, Mother,
You wait on the hillside,
Until we believe,
Until we can welcome
The ones whom you send.

— Jane Deren

To Our Lady of Guadalupe
From Education for Justice
Discernment

As we consider actions to take on the issue of immigration, it is important to keep in mind our talents and abilities. For some of us, our involved action may be hands-on work for justice. For others, our involved action may be through prayer and presence. The questions that follow will help to determine where you might be able to help create justice for the immigrant, as you study these additional resources.

Advocacy: Utilizing Catholic Social Teaching

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has created both Principles for Immigration Reform, and Recommendations for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. As we become advocates of justice for immigrants, consider how these resources can be assets.

Catholic Social Teaching: Principles for Immigration Reform of U. S. Catholic Bishops

1. Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland: The bishops’ first principle is that a person has the right not to migrate. Homelands should provide opportunities for a dignified and fulfilling life. Public policy efforts should address economic inequities through just trade practices, economic development and debt relief. Peacemaking should be proactive to prevent refugee conditions.

2. Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families: When sufficient employment is not possible in one’s own country, people have a right to migrate to find work elsewhere. Governments should be accommodating to this right. Those who are forced to leave their homes as a result of war and persecution must be given special consideration.

3. Sovereign nations have a right to control their borders: The bishops acknowledge that nations have the right to reasonably control their territories to further the common good, but not when it is done for the purpose of acquiring wealth. Economically wealthier nations have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flow. For example, countries like the United States with labor demands attract foreign workers.

4. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection: The global community should protect those seeking refuge from wars and persecution. At a minimum, migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to be fully considered for refugee status.

5. The human rights and the human dignity of undocumented migrants should be respected: Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary and should afford due process of the law.

Recommendations for Comprehensive Immigration Reform of Bishops of Mexico and the United States

In the 2003 document, Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope, the Catholic bishops of Mexico and the United States explained why the U.S. immigration system is badly in need of reform and offered comprehensive recommendations for fixing it.
1. **The Issue of Poverty**

   Migrants are often forced to leave their homes because of a lack of economic opportunities in their own countries.

   **Recommendation:**
   International global anti-poverty efforts are needed to create the types of conditions that do not force people to leave their homes. Just trade, international economic aid, and debt relief should all be pursued by all the developed countries.

2. **The Issue of Separation**

   U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents endure long years of separation from family members while waiting for extremely long backlogs of available visas, often waiting up to 15 or more years for the visa to become available.

   **Recommendation:**
   Pending backlogs should be reduced and more visas made available so that families can be reunified.

3. **The Issue of Labor**:

   The U.S. economy depends on labor provided by immigrants, but the temporary-worker system is fraught with abuses.

   **Recommendation:**
   A more rational and humane system is needed to govern the entry into the United States of laborers from other countries. Any new temporary worker program must include: 1) an achievable path to permanent residency; 2) provisions for immediate family members to join the worker; 3) job adaptability, allowing workers to change employers; 4) the same labor protections as U.S. workers; 5) mechanisms to enforce workers’ rights; 6) wages and benefits that do not undercut domestic workers; 7) the ability to visit one’s homeland while working in the United States; 8) a labor market test to ensure that U.S. workers will not be harmed.

4. **The Issue of Undocumented Workers**

   Undocumented workers who are already in the country and have formed lives here are often “stuck,” having no means to become legal.

   **Recommendation:**
   Those already in the United States who do not have proper immigration documentation should be given the opportunity to obtain legalization if they can demonstrate good moral character and have built up equities in this country.

5. **The Issue of Lack of Access to Due Process**

   Immigrants have often been subject to laws and policies that debase our country’s fundamental commitment to individual liberties and due process, such as detention for months without charges, secret hearings, and ethnic profiling. Asylum seekers are also incarcerated for long periods of time in which their claims for asylum are being considered.

   **Recommendation:**
   Government policies should not confuse immigration with terrorism. The government should revisit these unfair laws and make the appropriate changes consistent with due process rights. The system for responding to asylum seekers should also be reformed.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Awareness</strong></th>
<th><strong>Involvement</strong></th>
<th><strong>Leadership</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recall your own immigration story. Are you a first, second or third generation immigrant to the United States?</td>
<td>Gather members of your church, work group, or community to share your immigration stories.</td>
<td>Expand your circle by inviting new immigrants to share their journeys. Are there changes in your perspective on immigration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read and study Church teachings on the human dignity and rights of immigrants.</td>
<td>Organize a faith community study group on the topic. Resource: <em>Justice for Immigrants Parish Resource Kit</em>. <a href="http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org">www.justiceforimmigrants.org</a></td>
<td>Draft a corporate stand or social justice practice statement for your church or group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Form a study group and explore an aspect of this complex issue: history of immigration, economic impacts, effects/impacts of NAFTA and CAFTA, national security. <a href="http://www.migrationinformation.org">www.migrationinformation.org</a></td>
<td>Run a series of church bulletin spots on myths and facts, or historical and current contributions of immigrants.</td>
<td>Ask your church to consider using the JustMatters module, <em>Crossing Borders: Migration, Theology and the Human Journey</em>. <a href="http://www.justfaith.org">www.justfaith.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View the film, <em>Dying to Live: A Migrant’s Journey</em>. <a href="http://www.dyingtolive.nd.edu">www.dyingtolive.nd.edu</a></td>
<td>Schedule a group showing of the film and facilitate a group discussion. Reflection questions: <a href="http://www.dyingtolive.nd.edu">www.dyingtolive.nd.edu</a>.</td>
<td>Lead a group to participate in a public witness on behalf of justice for immigrants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the intersection of issues for refugees, migrants and immigrants. Consider the history and relationships of these groups in the United States and in your church tradition. IPJC AMOS Winter 2012 or <a href="http://www.usccb.org/mrs">www.usccb.org/mrs</a></td>
<td>Hold an immigration forum. Invite speakers from organizations that support and protect refugees, migrants and immigrants. <a href="http://www.ipjc.org/links/immigration.htm">www.ipjc.org/links/immigration.htm</a></td>
<td>Organize an immersion experience to meet local farm-workers, or to a border town. Learn about the economic, cultural, and political situations and the hopes of the people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch for media coverage on the effects of raids, detention, and deportation on families.</td>
<td>Gather a group to watch <em>The Least of These</em>. Follow up with a debriefing on the trauma of children held in detention. <a href="http://www.theleastofthese-film.com">www.theleastofthese-film.com</a></td>
<td>Visit an immigrant detention center in your area. Advocate for immigrant detainee rights, including medical and mental health care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research current state and federal immigration legislation, such as The Dream Act. Identify priorities for immediate action. <a href="http://www.ncsl.org">www.ncsl.org</a> <a href="http://www.govtrack.us">www.govtrack.us</a> <a href="http://www.nilc.org">www.nilc.org</a></td>
<td>Contact your state and federal legislators to take action to create a just path for citizenship, to address the root causes of migration, and to support family unity. <a href="http://www.nnirr.org">www.nnirr.org</a>, <a href="http://www.networklobby.org">www.networklobby.org</a>, <a href="http://www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org">www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org</a></td>
<td>Coordinate a church call-in or letter-writing campaign, taking a stand on immigration reform.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center: www.ipjc.org
**U.S. Detention Centers**

The Adrian Dominican Sisters are present in many of the states where detention centers process immigrants for deportation. Groups around the country are holding vigils. See if there is a detention center near you. Consider starting or joining an action.

For the most updated list, go to: [www.detentionwatchnetwork.org](http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Detention Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Alabama** | Etowah County Jail  
Perry County Correctional Center |
| **Alaska**  | Anchorage Correctional Ctr. East  
Anchorage Correctional Ctr. West  
Highland Mountain Correctional Ctr. |
| **Arizona** | Central Arizona Detention Center  
Eloy Detention Center  
Florence Correctional Center  
Florence Service Processing Ctr.  
Pinal County Jail  
Arizona State Prison Complex |
| **California** | Yuba County Jail  
Sacramento County Jail  
Santa Clara  
Kern County Jail (Lerdo)  
USP Lompoc, U.S. Penitentiary  
Taft Correctional Institution  
California City Correctional Center  
Mira Loma  
Los Angeles Men’s Central Jail  
Santa Ana  
San Diego CCA (Otay Mesa)  
Western Region Detention Facility at San Diego  
El Centro Service Processing Ctr. |
| **Colorado** | Aurora Service Processing Center  
Park County Jail |
| **Florida** | Bay County Jail and Annex  
Wakulla County Jail  
Baker County Jail  
Nassau County Jail  
Citrus County Detention Facility  
Hernando County Jail  
Orange County Jail  
Glades County Jail  
Broward Transitional Center  
Krome Service Processing Center  
Palm Beach County Jail  
Monroe County Detention Center |
| **Georgia**  | Atlanta Pretrial Detention Center  
Stewart Detention Center  
Colquitt County Jail |
| **Illinois** | Broadview Processing Center  
Kenosha County Detention Center  
McHenry County Jail  
Tri-County Detention Center |
| **Indiana**  | U.S. Penitentiary Terre Haute  
Christian County Jail |
| **Kentucky** | Boone County Jail  
Christian County Jail |
| **Louisiana** | Concordia Parish Correctional Ctr.  
LaSalle Detention Facility  
Tensas Parish Detention Center  
Orleans Parish Prison  
St. Martin Parish Correctional Ctr.  
Pine Prairie Correctional Center  
Calcasieu Parish Prison  
Oakdale Federal Detention Center  
South Louisiana Correctional Ctr. |
| **Maryland** | Frederick County Detention Center  
Carroll County Detention Center  
Howard County Detention Center  
Dorchester Co. Det. Center  
St. Mary’s County Detention Ctr.  
Wicomico Co. Detention Center  
Worcester County Jail |
| **Michigan** | Chippewa County Jail  
Calhoun County Jail  
Monroe County Jail  
Wayne County Jail |
| **Missouri** | Caldwell County Detention Center  
Montgomery County Jail  
Lincoln County Jail  
Morgan County Jail  
Mississippi County Jail |
| **Mississippi** | Lauderdale County Detention Ctr.  
Rankin County Detention Center |
| **New Mexico** | Grayson County Detention Center |
Reflection Questions

**Reflection Question 1:**
Having spent time with the Pastoral Circle, and examining the resources available to me, what do I see myself called to within my ministry?

**Reflection Question 2:**
Having spent time with the Pastoral Circle, and examining the resources available to us, what is my community called to collectively?

Discerning Action

- What is the action(s) that I/we might consider?
- How could it affect me, our community, and the Congregation?
- What gifts/energy do we have among us that can accomplish something we feel called to do?
- What is our realistic goal?
- What are the specific steps we need to carry out that goal?
- What is our timeline?
- How might my church, community, Mission Chapter, or Mission Group be involved?
- Form a study group utilizing this booklet?
- Participate in an intercommunity action for immigration?
- Write or visit legislators?
General Resources
Many of these terms are used in legal contexts. In other areas of our lives, we have committed to the use of non-violent language. Language that honors the person above her or his legal status — i.e., “people who have immigrated” instead of “aliens” — is consistent with this commitment.

**Alien**
Term used in U.S. law to refer to a person’s legal status as a non-citizen or non-national of the United States. It includes people who are here legally, as well as those who are here in violation of the Immigration and Naturalization Act.

**Asylum**
Permission granted to reside in the United States to a person fleeing persecution in another country. Under current U.S. law, to receive asylum a person must be entitled to refugee status.

**E-Verify**
An Internet-based, free program run by the U.S. government that compares information from an employee's Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 to data from U.S. government records. If the information matches, that employee is eligible to work in the United States. The program is operated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in partnership with Social Security Administration.

**Family-Sponsored Immigration**
U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents can petition to bring immediate family members from other countries to live permanently in the United States.

**Free Trade Agreements**
Treaties between countries that facilitate the free movement of labor and capital, removing certain taxes, environmental laws, and worker protections.

**Guest Worker**
Temporary workers admitted to the United States under one of 70 visas categories.

**Immigrant**
A foreign-born individual residing in the United States.

**Legal Permanent Resident (LPR)**
A person who has been granted permission to live in the United States, but who is not a citizen. Also known as a “green card” holder.
**Naturalization**

The name of the process through which qualifying individuals maintain their status and meet certain other eligibility criteria to become U.S. citizens. Applicants must generally reside in the United States for five years.

**Legal Non-Citizen**

An individual who is permitted to enter the United States for a period of limited duration, including students, tourists, temporary workers, business executives, diplomats, artists, entertainers, and reporters who must pass immigration inspection upon arrival in the United States.

**Maquiladora**

The Mexican name for manufacturing operations in a free trade zone (FTZ), where factories import material and equipment on a duty-free and tariff-free basis for assembly, processing, or manufacturing and then re-export the assembled, processed and/or manufactured products, sometimes back to the country where the raw materials originated.

**Refugee**

Under U.S. law, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in his/her country of nationality by reason of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Under the Refugee Act of 1980, persons whose asylum claim is approved can, after a year, apply for residence. Once granted asylum, the person is called an “asylee.”

**Secure Communities**

A U.S. deportation program that relies on partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the interior immigration enforcement agency within the Department of Homeland Security, is the program manager.

**Undocumented Immigrant**

A person who is in the country without the permission of the U.S. government, lacking the required paperwork. Undocumented immigrants enter the United States illegally, without being inspected by an immigration officer or by using false documents; or legally, with a temporary visa, and then remain in the United States beyond the expiration date of the visa.

**U.S. Citizen**

Includes everyone born in the United States, as well as a person born abroad to U.S. citizen parents or who immigrated to the United States and became a “naturalized” citizen.

Source: *Interfaith Worker Justice*

www.iwj.org
**DVDs**

*Available on loan from Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center — IPJC@IPJC.org or 206-223-1138.*

**De Nadie (2005)**
The story of a Central American immigrant's difficult journey to the United States in search of a better life. 80 minutes.

**Dying to Live: A Migrant’s Journey (2005)**
A profound look at the human face of the immigrant. It explores who these people are, why they leave their homes and what they face in their journey. Discussion guide available. 33 minutes.

**Honoring Human Dignity and the Common Good (2010)**
DVD recordings of a Woodstock Theological Center Forum on Immigration with Cardinal Theodore McCarrick; Gasper Lo Biondo, SJ; Donald Kerwin; Jill Marie Gerschutz; and Octavio González

**Lives for Sale (2007)**
From Orbis Books. A one-hour investigative documentary exposes the painful, rarely seen human side of illegal immigration, including the growing black market trade in human beings. PBS. 60 minutes.

**We are all Immigrants (2011)**
This documentary features generations of immigrants from 10 countries and tells the compelling stories – the painful and the joyful – of immigrants who settled in Pittsburgh. Immigrants recount their challenges in coming to the city and also their contributions to the region. A production of PATH to Justice of the Tri-Diocesan Sisters Leadership Conference. 30 Minutes.

**Other Media Resources**

**The New Americans (2004)**
Follows four years in the lives of a diverse group of contemporary immigrants and refugees as they journey to start new lives in America. Series Guide and Activity Kit available for download.

**Papers (the movie) (2009)**
The story of undocumented youth and the challenges they face as they turn 18 without legal status. 88 minutes.

**Lost in Detention (2011)**
PBS Frontline documentary investigates the Obama administration’s immigration enforcement strategies and journeys into the secretive world of immigrant detention. From PBS. 60 minutes.

**The Least of These (2009)**
Documentary on family detention in America. The film explores the government rationale for family detention, conditions at the facility, collateral damage, and the role and limits of community activism in bringing change. 62 minutes.

**The Other Side of Immigration (2010)**
Based on interviews with men and women in the Mexican countryside, this documentary explores why so many people leave small Mexican towns to work in the United States and what happens to the families and communities they leave behind. 55 minutes.
American Civil Liberties Union Immigrants Rights Project
Works to defend the civil and constitutional rights of immigrants through a comprehensive program of impact litigation and public education. Extensive list of current updates, legal and legislative documents.

American Friends Service Committee
A faith-based organization working towards social justice, including immigrant rights.

Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC)
CLINIC aims to enhance and expand delivery of legal services to indigent and low-income immigrants, principally through diocesan immigration programs and to meet the immigration needs identified by the Catholic Church in the United States. The network employs roughly 1,200 attorneys and "accredited" paralegals who, in turn, serve 400,000 low-income immigrants each year. CLINIC and its member agencies represent low-income immigrants without reference to their race, religion, gender, ethnic group, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform
Unites Christian leaders and activists to educate and advocate in churches, communities, and with elected officials to render compassionate and comprehensive immigration reform.

Detention Watch Network
National coalition of organizations and individuals working to educate the public and policy makers about the U.S. immigration detention and deportation system and advocate for humane reform. View the map of detention centers to find groups organizing visitation programs near you.

Dream Activist
Multicultural, migrant-youth-led, social media hub for the movement to pass the DREAM Act and pursue the enactment of other forms of legislation that aim to mend the broken immigration system.

Fair Immigration Reform Movement
A project of the Center for Community Change led by low-income immigrant and non-immigrant grassroots community organizations working for immigration reform and immigrant rights.

Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC)
The ILRC provides trainings, materials and advocacy to advance immigrant rights. As a legal services organization, the ILRC trains lawyers and paralegals on ever-changing and complex immigration law. They develop leadership by encouraging immigrants to play leading roles in confronting and reshaping the laws and policies that perpetuate racial, economic and social injustice. They educate and empower people in the immigrant community so that they may organize and advocate for the rights and privileges that best define our democratic traditions.

Justice for Immigrants: The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform
Works to mobilize a network of Catholic and non-Catholic institutions and people in support of comprehensive immigration reform. Many
downloadable fact sheets and advocacy tools for both individuals and organizations.

**Immigration Policy Center (IPC)**
Through its research and analysis, IPC provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with accurate information about the role of immigrants and immigration policy on U.S. society.

**Migration Information Source**
Provides a compilation of data and facts from numerous global organizations and governments, and global analysis of international migration and refugee trends.

**National Immigration Forum**
A non-profit advocating and building support for public policies that welcome immigrants and refugees and are fair and supportive to newcomers in the United States. Very current immigration information, including policy alerts.

**National Immigration Law Center**
A non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and promoting the rights and opportunities of low-income immigrants and their family members.

**National Immigration Project**
A national legal advocacy group specializing in defending the rights of immigrants facing deportation and incarceration. Policy updates are available on the homepage.

**National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights**
A national alliance working to promote a just immigration policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status. Up to date fact sheets and publications.

**Pew Hispanic Center**
A non-partisan research organization that seeks to improve understanding of the U.S. Hispanic population and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation.

**Reform Immigration for America**
A united national effort that brings together individuals and grassroots organizations to build support for workable comprehensive immigration reform.

**U.S. Catholic Bishops and Immigration**
A collaboration between the U.S. Bishops' Department of Migration and Refugee Services and the Catholic University of America.

**U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services**
Migration and Refugee Services carries out the commitment of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to serve and advocate for immigrants, refugees, migrants, and people on the move.

Bibliography of Organizations prepared by Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center.

Links to listed organizations are available at http://www.ipjc.org/links/immigration.htm.
Prayer of César Chávez

Show me the suffering of the most miserable, So I will know my people’s plight.

Free me to pray for others, For you are present in every person.

Help me to take responsibility for my own life, So that I can be free at last.

Grant me courage to serve others, For in service there is true life.

Give me honesty and patience, So that I can work with other workers.

Bring forth song and celebration, So that the spirit will be alive among us.

Let the spirit flourish and grow, So we will never tire of the struggle.

Let us remember those who have died for justice, For they have given us life.

Help us love even those who hate us, So we can change the world.

— César E. Chávez 1927-1993

Isaiah 58
Immigrant Solidarity Prayer Vigil

Reader 1:

In response to a wave of states proposing similar legislation to Arizona’s SB 1070, and in solidarity with the faith and immigrant communities, the Interfaith Immigration Coalition has initiated a prayer and public witness vigil. We stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters in hope for comprehensive immigration reform.

Today we join in this communion of prayer inspired by the Prophet Isaiah.

Reader 2:

A reading from Isaiah 58:6-8

Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed...

Leader:

God of compassion, you stand always on the side of the oppressed, for those most vulnerable. Open our eyes and hearts to the struggles of immigrants who live and work among us, for Scripture reminds us...

R: When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God.

(Leviticus 19:33-34)

Leader:

We pray for an end to the violence and poverty that displace so many people from their homes and homelands.

R: We pray as a people of hope.

Leader:

For migrant workers, that they may labor in safe and just conditions, and that we who benefit from their labor may be truly grateful for what they provide...

R: We pray as a people of hope.
Leader:
For those who suffer separation from family through detention and deportation...

R: We pray as a people of hope.

Leader:
For all organizations dedicated to assisting refugees, migrants and other vulnerable populations, may their mission bring about justice and reflect God's infinite love...

R: We pray as a people of hope.

Leader:
We pray for those who fan the flames of fear and discrimination against immigrants...

R: May their hearts be touched by your divine love.

Leader:
For our elected officials, that they may find the wisdom and courage to help reform our broken immigration system, so that the basic human dignity of all persons is protected...

R: We pray as a people of hope.

Communal Prayer Petitions

R: God, hear our prayers (after each petition).

ALL: God, give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity, so that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

Silent Reflection

Closing Song:
“Song of the Body of Christ,” David Haas, *Breaking Bread*
This booklet was developed by the Justice Promoters of the Adrian Dominican Sisters under the auspices of the Office of Global Mission Justice and Peace, with support from the Seattle-based Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center (www.ipjc.org).

For additional copies of this publication, contact the Justice and Peace Office at justiceandpeace@adriandominicans.org.

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