

Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform



HOMILY HELPS

If we listen to the voices of the undocumented among us, we hear cries of sadness and despair and pleas for help.

“The jobs in my home town in Mexico pay little to nothing. What I and many of my friends have had to endure is the pleading eyes and cry of our children for food. “Papa, I’m hungry.” I had to make the hard decision to leave my family to try to find work that pays a livable wage in the United States. I had to endure the desert - rattlers, intense heat, robbers, vigilantes, border guards, because there are no worker visas available. Here now for three years, I am able to send money home now to feed my children. But I dream of having a good job and being able to live again in the town of my birth. As long as there are laws in the U.S. and in my home country that drive our country more and more into poverty, that day may not come. I take hope in the good people, the compassionate ones who have welcomed me and who dream with me that one day again I will united with my family, that I will hold my wife in my arms and gaze with joy on the loving faces of my precious children.”

Perhaps the Prophet Jeremiah offers the most hopeful words to Juan and the over 12 million Filipino, Polish, African, Irish, Central American, and Mexican immigrants with similar stories: “Behold, I will bring them back... I will gather them... with the blind and the lame in their midst, the mothers and those with child. They departed in tears, but I will console them and guide them; I will lead them to brooks of water, on a level road, so that none shall stumble.”

As Christians, we are called to be the ‘I’ of this reading. We are called to be the instruments of helping our brothers and sisters in our own country and around the world realize the dignity and respect they deserve. As many of us know, there is a great debate about immigration in this country. Many people have fled the security of their homes, their families, their roots, to find work that will help them realize their own dignity as spouses and fathers and mothers. They have come, not because they want to, but because they have to. That is their reality, a reality most of us cannot identify with.

For many of us, we just don’t know enough about the issue. We get focused on the word ‘illegal’ and the conversation stops there. But as Christians we are called to be like Bartimaeus, seeking to be freed from our blindness on this issue and so many other issues that deprive others of their dignity. There are some in power who want us to stay uneducated, to buy into their prejudice. We hear lots of stories about immigrants taking advantage of social services, welfare, taking our jobs, etc. from some of these people in power. They are like the people on the road rebuking Bartimaeus: Be quiet. Stay blind.

As Christians, like Bartimaeus we seek to be freed of our blindness on this issue because it affects the way we see the world around us, the way it affects hard-working brothers and sisters among us who live in the shadows and seek only to be recognized for their

humanity and their contributions to society. We need to hear the stories of families torn apart, individuals mistreated by unscrupulous lawyers and employers and vigilantes. We need to hear the stories of mothers and fathers facing deportation and separation from their spouses and children. We need to hear the stories of the billions of dollars being deducted from the wages of these men and women, money they may never see reflected in benefits down the line. We need to hear the stories of the great contributions so many are making to this country and our economy.

Like Bartimaeus, we approach the Lord in faith to remove our blindness. We offer the encouraging voices of the Church, of the Priests for Justice for Immigrants, of the Cardinal and bishops, “Take courage, get up, Jesus is calling you.” We ask that the Lord, through our priests, religious, parish leadership and so many others, help to remove our blindness.

May our cry each day be that of Bartimaeus: “Master, I want to see.” With open eyes and generous hearts we can then work together to find ways to help immigrants, and so many others among us, realize their dignity and unify their families as part of the great family of humankind.



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PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

*God calls us a members of the mystical body of Christ
To be strangers to each no longer. To be in the world but not of the world.
Let us pray for the needs of all of our brothers and sisters.*

- We pray for the Pope and bishops who comprise the Magisterium of the Church. That the church's teaching on the dignity of all human beings: be they poor, widowed, immigrant or unborn, be heard and planted in the hearts of all Christians and people of good will. We pray to the Lord
- We pray for the Church of Chicago, especially those who have been given the responsibility for the care of the public and common good, that they may inform their consciences with the light of faith and the call for justice and mercy. We pray to the Lord.
- We pray for the reunification of families, that those who have been separated from their families either because of war, poverty, or deportations may be reunited. We pray to the Lord
- We pray for those who have died on our nations borders in the search for a more healthy and dignified life, that the Lord grant them true liberty and the fullness of justice in Kingdom of God. We pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, we present to you these cares for our brothers and sisters, especially those who are separated from family members and loved ones because of political boundaries. Help us to discover that the greatest gift you have given us is each other, through Christ our Lord.

