

Justice for our immigrants

 www.thecompassnews.org/2015/09/justice-for-our-immigrants/

In this second year of “Teach My People to Pray,” I am asking that all families, regardless of their shape and size, make their household a home of prayer and love. There are many families who are hurting and in need of healing, which is especially true among migrant families who are coming to the United States in search of a better life. These families do not have a home and many times are fleeing violence and/or persecution. However, the current U.S. family detention system does nothing to protect the sanctity of the family, which we in our diocese, are trying so hard to prayerfully build up.



Bishop Ricken

Family detention facilities located in Texas, California, Illinois, Arizona and New Jersey were recently studied by Migration and Refugee Services and the Center for Migration Studies. They issued a report titled, “Unlocking Human Dignity: A Plan to Transform the U.S. Immigrant Detention System,” where it highlighted the inhumane and harmful effects family detention has on the physical, emotional and mental well-being of those who are already extremely vulnerable. The report hopes to raise awareness of family detention practices while urging public officials to reform the current system. I would encourage you to read it as well: www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/upload/unlocking-human-dignity.pdf.

The Justice for Immigrants initiative through the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops will be hosting a three-day conference from Nov. 11-13 in Chicago that will focus on immigration and family detention practices. Please go to our website, gbdioc.org, to learn how to register for this event. A highlight of this conference will be that participants will have the opportunity to go pray the rosary in front of the detention center located nearby.

As people of faith, we can never forget that migration is rooted in both the Old and New Testaments, and we are all called to welcome the stranger regardless of their immigration status. “This biblical tradition reminds us that discipleship requires solidarity with the ‘least of these,’ including the imprisoned stranger ... it recognizes the right to migrate in response to war, natural disaster, human rights abuses, extreme poverty and whenever human beings cannot realize their God-given dignity at home” (Unlocking Human Dignity, 5).

We cannot forget that we are all disciples on the way, journeying back to our Creator. Let us pray for all migrants and their families:

Good and gracious God, we thank you for the gift of families.

We are grateful for all of the joy and love that they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life.

Show mercy to those who travel in danger, and lead them to a place of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice.

As we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, and St. Joseph the Worker, her spouse, we pray that all migrants may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek.

Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge.

Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.

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