

Major Problems of our Immigration Situation

Subsidized USA agribusiness products like corn are sold in Mexico at prices below what Mexican farmers can produce causing a move of Mexican workers to the USA.

American-born workers suffer if there is a vast pool of undocumented workers who are easily exploited by employers who seek unfair advantage. All of us are stronger if all of us have rights.

Raids in workplaces and neighborhoods and rogue enforcement agents at all levels are terrorizing immigrant workers and dividing families without making us any safer and without fixing the real problems with our immigration system.

Our out-of-date laws force many American families to remain separated for years – and in some cases, decades – because of backlogs and barriers to family unification in our immigration system.

Finally, our outdated laws are practically unenforceable, driving too much immigration into the black market and not enough immigration through legal and orderly channels for immigrants who want to work in this country.

The result is hundreds of thousands of immigrants being detained each year, hundreds of thousands deported, people forced to take life-threatening risks because they cannot enter legally, people dying in the desert, and people dying in detention due to awful conditions and official neglect.

We can and must do better.

Marianist Immigration Prayer Service



Opening Hymn

Suggested Hymns:

“In Christ There Is No East or West” by Kevin Keil

“Pan de Vida” by Bob Hurd

“Service” by Buddy Caeser (NARL)

“E Na Lima Hana” by David Haas and Joe Camacho

“We are Many Parts” by Marty Haugen

#Weave One Heart” by Marty Haugen

“Diverse in Culture, Race and Nation” by Ruth Duck

“We Are Called” by David Haas

“Let There be Peace On Earth” by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson

Welcome

Leader: I invite us to pray as Marianists in the spirit of our cherished charism of discipleship of equals. We pray in union with Mary for immigrants that they be accepted as brothers and sister among us.

Opening Prayer¹

All:

God of the journey, God of the traveler,

We pray for those who leave their homes in search of new beginnings and possibilities,
may they know your presence with them.

We pray that those who seek to make a home in this country
may find us welcoming and willing to help them find a path toward citizenship,

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

We pray for those who fan the flames of fear and discrimination against the
undocumented

may be touched with your divine compassion.

We pray in union with you Mary who knew the life of an immigrant.

We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

¹

[People Migrate](#) lunes 10 de abril de 2006

Readings:

A Reading from the Prophet Zechariah 7: 8-11

(The word of the Yahweh was addressed to Zechariah as follows:) He said: Apply the law fairly, and practice kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow and the orphan, the settler and the poor man, and do not secretly plan evil against one another.

This is the Word of the Lord.

A Reading from “The Chronicles of Establishing the Society of Mary in America” from *American Memoirs* by Thomas Mooney, SM, written in 1869 and 1874.²

(This passage provides a snapshot of the life of the first Marianists in America who had recently arrived as immigrants.)

The six persons, that is, Father Meyer and five Brothers (Edel, Litz, Schultz, Stintzi, Zehler) continued to live together at Holy Trinity (in Cincinnati), and four of the brothers were engaged in teaching two of the schools....Their manner of living was exceedingly simply, and many were the privations they suffered. During that winter (1849-50) the winter the weather was unusually severe, yet their clothing was light; and at night, though often shivering with cold, no one even thought of setting up a stove in the sleeping room.

After Christmas, Brother Zehler became seriously ill, and besides the suffering occasioned by his illness, he also had to endure the no less painful ones occasioned by the intense cold. The quilts belonging to the six-member community were scarcely sufficient to keep half of them warm, and at night the sick brother had to return to the others the bedclothes he had borrowed from them in the morning. This fact serves at once to show the poverty of the whole and the consequent sufferings by each member of the little family, especially of him who was laid low by sickness.”

Sharing: One or more persons or the entire group depending on the size are invited to share stories of immigrants in their families or among friends or acquaintances.

Remembering the Immigrant Prayer³

²Mooney, Thomas, SM; Brueck, John, SM; Gorman, Edward, *American Memoirs*, (Dayton: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 1999) p15.

³ Source: adapted from the National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, www.nicwj.org

Leader: We serve a God who directs us to care especially for those most vulnerable in society. Our Scriptures tell us of God's special concern for the "alien" or the "stranger," or as more contemporary translations say – the immigrant.

All: For the Lord our God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. God defends the cause of the orphan and the widow, and loves the immigrant, giving the immigrant food and clothing. And we are to love those who are immigrants, for God's people were immigrants in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

Leader: We ask God to open our eyes to the struggles of immigrant workers, for we know what Scripture calls us to:

All: We must not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether the worker is a resident or immigrant living in our town. We must pay the worker the wages promptly because the worker is poor and counting on it. (Deuteronomy 24:14)

Leader: God's desire is that those who build houses may live in them,

All: And that those who plant may eat. (Isaiah 65:22)

Leader: And yet we know this is not possible for many in our midst.

All: We know of: farm workers who cannot feed their families; construction workers who have no homes; nursing home workers who have no health care; restaurant workers who cannot afford a meal in the restaurant.

Leader: We know that too many immigrant workers among us are not receiving the fruits of their labor, nor the justice required by the courts.

All: God charges our judges to hear disputes and judge fairly, whether the case involves citizens or immigrants. (Deuteronomy 1:16)

Leader: But our laws do not adequately protect immigrants. Our legal and social service programs exclude many immigrants. Many immigrant victims of Hurricane Katrina do not have access to the same government assistance as U.S.citizens.

All: God tells us that the community is to have the same rules for citizens and for immigrants living among us. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. Citizens and immigrants shall be the same before the Lord. (Numbers 15:15)

Leader: Many immigrant workers are underpaid and work long hours. Yet, Scripture tells us that when an immigrant lives in our land,

All: We will not mistreat him or her. We will treat an immigrant as one of our native born. We will love an immigrant as ourselves, for God's people were once immigrants in Egypt. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Leader: To those who employ immigrant workers, we lift up God's command:

All: Do not oppress an immigrant. God's people know how it feels to be immigrants because they were immigrants in Egypt. (Exodus 23: 9)

Leader: To those who craft our immigration laws and policies, we lift up God's command:

All: Do not deprive the immigrant or the orphan of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that God's people were slaves in Egypt and the Lord our God redeemed them from there. (Deuteronomy 24:17-18)

Leader: To all of us who seek to do God's will, help us to:

All: Love one another as God has loved us. Help us to treat immigrants with the justice and compassion that God shows to each of us.

Closing Prayer

ALL: Salve Regina:
Hail, holy Queen, mother of mercy,
Our life, our sweetness, and our hope.
To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To you do we send up our sighs,
Mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.
Turn then, most gracious advocate,
Your eyes of mercy toward us, and after this exile
Show to us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus
O clement. O loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary.

Closing Hymn*

(See list of suggested hymns from beginning of service)

Suggested DVD's for viewing

Immigration is a complex issue that is changing the face of cultures worldwide. In the United States, it is often a controversial issue with many social and economic, political and even religious implications. In the midst of the debate, what often gets lost are the human issues at stake.

“Dying to Live” is 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. Drawing on the insights of Pulitzer Prize winning photographers, theologians, Church and congressional leaders, activists, musicians and the immigrants themselves, this film exposes the places of conflict, pain and hope along the US-Mexico border. It is a reflection on the human struggles for a dignified life and the search to find God in the midst of that struggle.

“Strangers no Longer” invites us to open our hearts and minds and identify with today's immigrants. It invites us to look into our past and notice the similarities that exist between ourselves and our ancestors when they came to this great land and those who are arriving now. We are made aware of the many global implications that cause people to migrate to the USA, including our need for more workers. It helps us to understand problems that exist with our current immigration system and underlines different solutions and activities that can be undertaken to fix what is broken. It reminds us of our moral responsibility to actively live our faith and our obligation to be a voice of change so that newcomers are strangers no longer.

“The Line in the Sand” uses the power of theater to tell the personal stories of people affected by U.S./Mexico border migration. Based on interviews with migrants, ranchers, Mexican and U.S. government officials, diocesan staff, and others, “The Line in the Sand” dramatically shares the stories of these people. Through an hour-long collection of monologues and photos, audiences are exposed to a variety of points of view on this complex and critical issue.

Pre Session Questionnaire

True or False:

- We need to seal the borders to win the war on terror.
- Unauthorized immigrants do not pay taxes.
- Most undocumented immigrants come to the US to go on welfare.
- The U.S. is the only large country with a large number of undocumented immigrants.
- The difficulty of coming to the US from Mexico legally drives unauthorized immigration
- There are plenty of good jobs in Mexico that pay a living wage.
- The largest number of undocumented immigrants come to the U.S. from Mexico. The second largest number comes from Ireland.
- Undocumented immigrants send most of their money back to Mexico.
- Most Latino children are undocumented.
- Immigrants don't want to learn English or become U.S. citizens.
- Most immigrants cross the border illegally.
- Undocumented immigrants have no regard for US law.

Answer in a few words:

What bothers me most about undocumented immigration is:

Where do you get most of your information about immigration?

Why do you think the Catholic Church has launched the Justice for Immigrants Campaign?

Dying to Live

Questions for discussion

Chapter 1: *Introduction* (untitled)

1. In what way has your life been a journey?
2. What kind of a planet do you want to leave to future generations?
3. What do you think about the immigrant as a threat to your job, home or well being?
4. How is Christ present in the immigrant?

Chapter 2: *The Face of the Migrant*

1. Who are the immigrants? How do you feel when you see them looking for day labor?
2. Do you know any immigrants? Do you know if they are documented or not? What do you know about the process for becoming “legal” or entering the US legally?
3. Have you ever left something or some place that was dear to you?
4. Even though society may attempt to rob the undocumented immigrant of dignity, what does our faith say? Does your Marianist Charism play a role in your attitudes about immigration?

Chapter 3: *Push - Pull and Politics*

1. Has your feeling about immigrants changed since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001?
2. Do you think the border could be sealed?
3. Even though there are many undocumented immigrants in the US from Canada, why is no one talking about sealing that border?
4. What forces are pushing immigrants? What forces are pulling them?
5. What would happen to agriculture and the service industry in the United States without the labor of immigrants?
6. Do you see ways in which the common good might benefit from some kind of legalization of the undocumented work force?

Chapter 4: *The Journey*

1. Have you ever found yourself straddling fear and hope, not knowing how things would work out? Did you feel God’s presence with you in that situation?

2. Do you have mixed feelings about

- The services offered or sold in Altar?
- The Mexican government check points?
- The coyotes?

Chapter 5: *The Border and Beyond*

1. How long will we be able to stop people from seeking life?
2. Have you experienced each person God puts in your path as a gift or blessing?
3. What do you think about the Way of the Immigrant as being the Way of the Cross?
4. What does our Marianist spirit tell us about the 'signs of the times' and the next steps we as Marianist can be taking towards justice for immigrants?

Reflecting on the *Strangers No Longer* Video

Discussion Guide Questions

- Poverty, desperation, pursuit of a better life...are these legitimate reasons for migrating?

- How is the plight of today's migrants similar or different from that of the Holy Family in flight to and exile in Egypt?

- What are your family's immigrant roots and what compelled your ancestors to migrate?

- In what ways does our faith inform our attitudes toward immigrants and immigration policy, particularly in light of our Marianist Charism?

- Which do you think is the greater motivator for people to leave loved ones and risk illegal border crossings: the push of poverty and desperation or the pull of jobs in the U.S.?

- With so many Canadians in the U.S. without proper authority, why do you suppose there are not calls for sealing the northern border?

- In what practical ways can we live our Marianist Charism in response to the immigration challenges?

- How should U.S. policies toward immigrants be changed?

- What can individuals do to change these policies?

Online Resources for Immigration Policy Reform:

1. The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform:

<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/>

The Campaign's primary objectives are:

- To educate the public about Church teaching on migration and immigrants;
- To create political will for positive immigration reform
- To enact legislative and administrative reforms based on the principles articulated by the bishops;
- To organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

2. National Immigration Forum

www.immigrationforum.org

Advocates for the value of immigrants and immigration to the nation. The Forum uses its communications, advocacy and policy expertise to create a vision, consensus and strategy that leads to a better, more welcoming America – one that treats all newcomers fairly. Its goals are:

Develop relationships and an understanding of disparate views and, taking those views into account, craft a cohesive strategy across a range of issues;

Provide trusted **information, analysis and advocacy** strategy to key audiences shaping immigration policy and regulation across a range of immigration issues;

- **Engage a wider set** of pro-immigration voices across constituencies, regions and ethnicities;
- **Implement targeted** campaigns to advance the overall strategy of the pro-immigration alliance.

3. The United States Council of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org/whoweare.shtml>

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is an assembly of the hierarchy of the United States and the U.S. Virgin Islands who jointly exercise certain pastoral functions on behalf of the Christian faithful of the United States. The purpose of the Conference is to promote the greater good which the Church offers humankind, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate fittingly adapted to the circumstances of time and place. This purpose is drawn from the universal law of the Church and applies to the episcopal conferences which are established all over the world for the same purpose.