

December 24, 2018

Call to Prayer

God of our Advents, once again we enter this season of waiting when we cry out “Come, come Lord Jesus.” We wait for so many things, but deep within our hearts, we wait for the coming of your kingdom of peace and justice, of compassion and love for all peoples.

God of all peoples, today, we pray especially that you will open every heart to receiving the gift of your love – in all its dimensions, as reflected to us in the faces and deeds of our brothers and sisters. Help each of us, too, to make Christ visible in the flesh, as at Jesus’s birth 2000 years ago in Bethlehem.

Reading

An encounter with Christ in his mysteries ... cannot fail to draw attention to the face of Christ in others, especially in the most afflicted. How could one possibly contemplate the mystery of the Child of Bethlehem, in the joyful mysteries, without experiencing the desire to welcome, defend and promote life, and to shoulder the burdens of suffering children all over the world? How could one possibly follow in the footsteps of Christ the Revealer, in the mysteries of light, without resolving to bear witness to his “Beatitudes” in daily life? And how could one contemplate Christ carrying the Cross and Christ Crucified, without feeling the need to act as a “Simon of Cyrene” for our brothers and sisters weighed down by grief or crushed by despair? Finally, how could one possibly gaze upon the glory of the Risen Christ or of Mary Queen of Heaven, without yearning to make this world more beautiful, more just, more closely conformed to God’s plan? – *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 40

Prayer

Who will listen to the cries of the poor –
To the hopes and needs of those seeking a better life?
Who will listen if we don’t?

Who will speak so their voices will be heard –
So the wisdom and aspirations of migrant peoples will be heeded?
Who will speak if we don’t?

Who will see Christ in our brothers and sisters – in those who reveal new and unique aspects of God’s love as they seek to make a home with us?
Who will see Christ if we don’t?

Who will be the hands and feet of Christ – the hands that heal and nurture, and the feet that “bring good news?”
Who will be Love if we aren’t?

Story (Optional)

Carmela from Peru

I survived 8 years of physical and sexual abuse at the hands of my biological father when I moved to New York. ... This had a life-changing impact on everyone. His visa was revoked and I also left the

country to avoid testifying against him. ... I had lost some of my native language and upon my return people kept asking me where I came from and why I was back in Peru, which was too painful and complicated to explain fully. ... I continued to feel lost and alienated and felt like I had no choice but to return to the US one year later, undocumented. Upon my return ... I worked two jobs to take me through Bronx Community College and even got married while at City College. I am currently completing my Masters in Social work at Columbia University – this is a lifelong dream being realized and something that I feel very passionate about. I now work with immigrant families and survivors of domestic abuse and often share my story with them. I feel open and empowered enough to share my story with the world and I can see that it makes a difference, that my life and experiences matter. I feel as though I can bring something unique to the table - I can identify with what many of them are going through, particularly undocumented migrants. That feeling of being undocumented can be overwhelming, it is easy to lose motivation, to lose hope. In the end, my life is testimony that a lot of things can happen along the way, bad things, but you have to keep going.



(Source: <http://iamamigrant.org/stories/united-states/carmela>)

Time for Reflection/Sharing

Consider listening to [Rune of Hospitality](#) as you reflect. Click the link to listen. (See Day 1 for lyrics.)

Suggested Action

Today, consider making a donation to [Annunciation House](#) or [Catholic Charities' Humanitarian Respite Center](#) – both of which provide basic services and accompaniment to migrants and refugees. Donate by clicking the links above, or mailing donations to the following addresses:

- *Annunciation House, 815 Myrtle Avenue, El Paso, Texas 79901*
- *Humanitarian Respite Center, C/o Catholic Charities
San Juan Office, 700 North Virgen de San Juan Blvd., San Juan, TX 78589*

Closing Prayer

God of the journey, God of the traveler, draw near to us. Fill us with the Spirit's desire to shape a future full of hope for our brothers and sisters who are strangers in this land. Give us the courage to open the doors of our hearts and our country to our neighbors, and give us the grace to build a society of justice and compassion.

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

Move us to new frontiers as we remember how you crossed every border between Divinity and humanity to make your home with us. Remind us of Blessed Theresa and all those who gave all they had so that the immigrants in America might have better lives. Move us to new frontiers, for we are all migrants journeying with you and one another toward your Kingdom.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.