

# PENTECOST

## PENTECOST PEOPLE: CALLED TO BE ADVOCATES

**Scripture:** John 15:26-27

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Advocate comes . . . the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father will testify to me. And you also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.”

### Reflection:

The Christian feast of Pentecost, the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter, has its roots in the Jewish feast of “Weeks” or “Shavuot,” 50 days after Passover, which celebrates the giving of the Law (Torah) on Mount Sinai and focuses on covenant renewal. For Christians, Pentecost echoes Jewish themes with the descent upon the disciples of the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, to form the Christian community. Today, Christians call upon the Holy Spirit to be renewed by the fire of God’s love and receive the wisdom and courage needed to be advocates with and for the most vulnerable people in our world. Advocates are challenged today, as they were in the early church, to testify to the truth of the gospel of Jesus, no small task in a society that devalues and distorts truth.

One truth is that all people, including immigrants, refugees and TPS recipients, have God-given human dignity and human rights. They deserve justice, compassion, and the opportunity to tell their stories without fear of detention and deportation. Those called upon to be advocates, filled with the fire of the Holy Spirit, support and join them.



Photo: No More Deaths

### Story:

While being an advocate is never without risk, lately it has cost a number of advocates their freedom. [No More Deaths](#) (NMD), a humanitarian organization based [in southern Arizona](#), which was begun in 2004 as a coalition of community and faith groups, is just one of a number of immigrant advocacy groups that has attracted the attention of Border Patrol (BP) and Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) in the past few months. NMD is dedicated to ending the deaths of migrants in the desert. Volunteers hike desert trails and leave water, food, clothing, and blankets along the way.

Over the past few months, members of the group have been [arrested and charged](#) with federal crimes and misdemeanors. These are immigrant advocates from all over the country simply trying to save the lives of migrants lost in the desert. One example is 35 year old Scott Warren, an instructor at Arizona State University. NMD members note that this is a marked shift from what had been the Border Patrol’s more tolerant approach toward humanitarian efforts.



Photo: No More Deaths

*(Resource developed through the Interfaith Immigration Coalition; written by Sister Ann Scholz of Leadership Conference of Women Religious and Sister Marie Lucey of Franciscan Action Network. Formatted by Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples of Christ.)*

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(Continued)



Read a full list of the more than 20 [Immigrant advocates](#) who have been detained and in some cases placed in deportation proceedings, by ICE during the current administration. Arrests have taken place in New York, Vermont, Washington, Colorado, Virginia, California, and Mississippi.

Ravi Rigbar, the Executive Director of the [New Sanctuary Coalition of NY City](#) was arrested, and a Haitian co-founder activist of the organization was deported this year. More than six immigrant leaders who advocate for dairy workers through [Migrant Justice](#) in Vermont, have been arrested in the past 14 months. Nine volunteers from No More Deaths were arrested in December of 2017. Six other advocates from around the country have also been detained. While ICE denies that it is singling out activists, groups including the American Civil Liberties Union and the United Nations Office of Human Rights, have called on the U.S. government to guarantee that it will not retaliate against immigrant advocates and activists, and help outline links between detention of advocates and other current policy changes: <https://www.aclu.org/blog/immigrants-rights/decoding-trumps-latest-anti-immigrant-attacks>

### Action:

- Continue to learn more about [No More Death's](#) work in the desert, [Migrant Justice's](#) mission to empower the farmworker community in Vermont, and [New Sanctuary New York City's](#) protection of immigrant communities.
- Join with No More Deaths to [urge Border Patrol's Tucson Sector](#) to stop interfering with humanitarian workers, and make a policy that formally prohibits the destruction of humanitarian-aid supplies and establishes it be subject to disciplinary action.
- Follow New Sanctuary New York City on Facebook, to respond to families facing threats: <https://www.facebook.com/NewSanctuaryCoalitionNYC>.



### Prayer:

God of Pentecost, send forth your Spirit. Enliven us, encourage us to share your word with power and love. May we be filled with the gifts of your Holy Spirit. Make us “truly wise” and “understanding” that we might relish what is right and just. Fill us with “fortitude” that we might work tirelessly for just and compassionate immigration reform. Sustain us by the “piety” of love and hope that we might be fearless advocates for those most in need.

May this feast of Pentecost enkindle in our hearts the fire of your love and energize us to continue to seek justice, in partnership with our immigrant sisters and brothers, as we participate in the mission of your Holy Spirit to “renew the face of Earth.” Amen.

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