

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



National Pastoral Migratoria

Lent Lamentation Prayer Service for Immigrants and Refugees



OPENING PRAYER

Loving and compassionate God,
you have blessed us with the glorious gift of a diverse human family.
Open our hearts and the hearts of all humankind to honor
Your sacred presence within each and all.
Deepen our understanding that the poor and the marginalized
have a privileged claim upon the consciences and gifts of believers
and the moral conscience of the state.
Accept our prayers for all immigrants and refugees throughout the world.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, our brother and Lord.
Amen.

ORATIONS

Creator of the covenant rainbow reflecting the beautiful diversity of humankind,
guide the nations of the world in honoring that diversity with justice and enduring peace.
Fill all leaders with wisdom and compassion,
that they may honor the tenets of our founding principles
in seeking to balance the safety of our citizens
with Your deep desire for us to extend that net of safety and security
to those seeking that same security and safety
that we often take for granted.

Compassionate God, in your mercy.

Response: Hear our prayer.

Savior of the world,
as you led your people from slavery to true freedom,
guide and direct this nation in the ways of justice and peace
modeling what it means to love you with our whole heart, soul and mind
and to love our neighbors as you love us.

Compassionate God, in your mercy.

Response: Hear our prayer.

Advocate of the lost and the weary,
our immigrant brothers and sisters long for safety, dignity and an opportunity to thrive.
Help us to welcome every son, daughter, mother and father,
every holy family seeking safety in our homeland.

Compassionate God, in your mercy.

Response: Hear our prayer.

LAMENTATIONS

Lord, to you, a day is like a thousand years,
and a thousand years are but a day.
The 15 year journey to full inclusion of our immigrant sisters and brothers
has seemed to them and to us who advocate with them, like
a thousand years of disappointment,
a thousand years of loss,
a thousand years of injustice,
a thousand years of hope yet unfulfilled.
We turn to you and cry out,
“How long, O Lord, how long?”

Our disappointments are countless.
Promises unfulfilled,
hopes raised and dashed
on the shores of the Rio Grande and
sweat-washed sands of the Gulf of Mexico.
We turn to you and cry out,
“How long, O Lord, how long?”

The loss of life, unrealized human potential,
dashed hopes and dreams, haunt us...
Haitian lives, Mexican lives, Central American lives,
Asian lives, Afghan lives, African lives and more.
Countless threats driving them to flee, only to be turned away
by the empty promise of a silent lady liberty.
We turn to you and cry out,
“How long, O Lord, how long?”

Apathy, indifference, hatred tearing at fragile spirits.
Twenty generations of disregard for the dignity and sanctity of
brown lives, black lives, indigenous lives, Asian lives,
people of color vs. white-washed minds and hearts.
We turn to you and cry out,
“How long, O Lord, how long?”

A president's unfulfilled promises,
hearts lifted, hearts broken; spirits buoyed, spirits drowned.
Would that the elected, the ordained, the people open their hearts...
We wait, we wait, O Lord, hope flickering and fading.
Where is the light of the world?
We trust in your promise, O Lord.
Yet still we cry out,
“How long, O Lord, how long?”

Fulfill your people's longing, O Lord.
Open our hearts, strengthen our will,
shape us, mold us, refine us to be Your instruments
of education, advocacy and accompaniment.
That laws will be enacted to enable all of our immigrant brothers and sisters
to be fully accepted, free to live and thrive in the land!
That in unwavering faith, all-inclusive love and boundless hope we can sing,
“O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?”
The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law.
But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

PRAYER FOR CONGRESSIONAL CALL TO ACTION

Prayer connects us with the Spirit of God.
Prayer unites us as one with the creator of all things.
Prayer does not change God, but changes those who, in all sincerity,
offer those prayers with trust in God
and openness to be active participants in the answer God responds to.
May these prayers empower us and other people of good will.

May they encourage and embolden our immigrant sisters and brothers,
honoring their dream:
fulfilling one day in the very near future
God's dream, our dream, for them.

1. That Congress enact compassionate comprehensive immigration reform of our broken immigration laws and system. Reform that will include a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.
2. That Congress take all necessary actions to end Migrant Protection Protocols and replace it with an approach that respects human dignity, exemplifies our national values, upholds the rule of law and embraces Christ's call to welcome the newcomer.
3. That Congress end Title 42 as a migration enforcement mechanism while restoring the right to asylum at the southern border in the U.S.
4. That Congress enact a more robust refugee resettlement program and that refugees find resettlement opportunities that are life-giving, respectful of their God-given dignity.
5. That Congress enact an end to widespread migrant detention, instead of prioritizing alternatives to detention.
6. That world leaders proactively address root causes of migration so that children, men and women are not forced to migrate from their homeland.
7. That legislators, religious leaders and other influencers may recognize and reverence the blessings of diversity, solidarity and openness to embrace the gifts of all God's People who, while facing the daily challenges of discrimination and fear of deportation, live in the hope of resurrection.
8. That the people of our nation may open their hearts to find the joys in offering radical compassion, overflowing mercy and unconditional love to those whom God cherishes as the least, yet greatest, among us.

CLOSING PRAYER

God of all faithfulness, deepen our faithfulness, strengthen our hope
and fill our hearts with extravagant love for the diversity of the human family.
Help us, in every way you desire,
to be conduits of your life-giving love, compassion and mercy.
Make us even more your people of promise,
your people of love, mercy and justice,
your people committed to creating a more just and hope-filled world.
We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, our brother and Savior,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of Your Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.



Prepared by Priests for Justice for Immigrants (PJI) and Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants (SBI).
For more information, contact Elena Segura at esegura@archchicago.org or 312.534.5333.