

# Solidarity

## Week 6 (April 6-12)

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This week, the Fast for Families is scheduled to end its cross country bus tour in Washington, DC.

### *Exodus 22:21-23*

*You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry*

### **Lucila's Story: Why She Fasts with the Fast for Families**

My name is Lucila. I come from a humble but proud family. This made my decision to tell them I had to leave to continue my education more difficult. Then, crossing the borders, leaving people I love, who are my parents and siblings, and friends in my country, Guatemala, not knowing when I would return. I did not know about strong laws. I just thought of an exit forward thinking of the best future and how to help my parents and a brother who is sick.

I arrived December 9, 2005. The first steps were to find work, study English, and continue with the dream of getting a GED and studying rights. But when I woke up to stark reality I could not continue. I began to work 7 days a week which doesn't give me time to go to school. Still I do not lose hope for an education, for immigration reform, but for that I have to fight to achieve my dreams and the dreams of 11 million people like me who just want to get out of poverty and put a plate of food on the table.

The reason I decided to fast is because I believe it is the only way that the Congress will listen to us. As an undocumented immigrant I worry every day about being deported. I have seen family and friends who only want to work and make a better life being deported. I have seen families separated. The people who come to the USA as undocumented work hard to make a better life. It is very sad to see broken families and deportation of working people. I felt that by fasting I could help bring about change.

### **Living in Solidarity with our Migrant Sisters and Brothers**

One of the foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching is the Principle of Solidarity—in short, we **are** keepers of one another, without exception—every sister and every brother. The practice of this virtue has far reaching implications for every decision that we make as families, communities and as members of an interdependent world has global consequences.

It is not enough to feel compassion or to bemoan the plight of so many children, women and men seeking a new life in the U.S., but rather solidarity is a firm resolve to commit oneself to the common good of all. We are meant to be keepers of one another regardless of race, ethnic origin or whatever border one might have crossed. We cannot settle for anything less than a comprehensive reform of an unjust and broken immigration policy in this country if we believe in being in solidarity with the common good of all people. We stand in solidarity with one another when we fast, demonstrate, pray, write letters to our congressional leaders, make phone calls and advocate in any creative way to bring the spotlight of public opinion to focus on unjust issues that can no longer be tolerated by those of us who take our commitment as 'keepers' seriously.

The Scripture readings for this week focus on the Spirit that has been poured out on all people and the desire of that Spirit is to live fully. Jesus was disturbed and deeply moved by pain, suffering and death, yet he was also very aware that all his actions had consequences. Jesus walked that fine line between political reactions to his decisions that called for systemic change and the common good out of which his actions flowed. May this same Spirit give us the courage to do no less than what Jesus lived and died for.

## *Prayer*

*Written for Pax Christi USA by Remigio Hernandez, an immigrant to the U.S. (Used with permission)*

O holy God, Heart of heaven and earth, praised be your holy name. Your daughters and sons, from all peoples of the world, regardless of borders, praise you.

We praise you and give you thanks because you have placed in our hands the immigrant pilgrims who make the earth flourish and produce, to bring food to the table of the rich and the poor alike.

We praise you and give you thanks because you walk always with those who cross borders, in search of well-being, doing their part in building the world you entrusted to us. On our way, we are mindful of your Presence in the promise to Abraham and in the liberation of your people, Israel.

We praise you and give you thanks for your blessings on all immigrants, and on those who cross all the borders in the US.

And you, O Lady of Guadalupe, empress of the Americas, be always our protector and intercessor for reconciliation and the building of equality and peace. AMEN

## **For Reflection:**

Who are my neighbor immigrants?

What borders did Jesus cross during his life with us?

What “borders” is God asking me to cross today?