

Interfaith Scriptures and Prayers for Week of Action and Prayer

Hebrew Scripture:

Leviticus 19: 32-34

If a stranger lives with you in your land, do not molest him. You must count him as one of your own countrymen and love him as yourself—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

Ecclesiastes 4: 8-9

To the poor man lend an ear, and return his greeting courteously. Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, and do not be mean-spirited in your judgments.

Jeremiah 22: 3-4

Yahweh says this: Practice honesty and integrity; rescue the man who has been wronged from the hands of his oppressor; do not exploit the stranger, the orphan, the widow; do no violence, shed no innocent blood in this place.

Deuteronomy 23:16-17

You shall not turn over to the master a slave who seeks refuge with you from that master. Such individuals shall live with you in any place they may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever they please; you must not ill-treat them.”

Psalm 82: 2-4

No more mockery of justice,
no more favoring of the wicked!
Let the weak and the orphan have justice,
be fair to the wretched and destitute;
rescue the weak and needy,
save them from the clutches of the wicked!

Christian Testament

Matthew 25: 35-40

For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me. . . . I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.

Galatians 3: 28

. . . there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

1 John 4: 19-21

Anyone who says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, is a liar, since a man who does not love the brother that he can see cannot love God, whom he has never seen.

So this is the commandment that he has given us, that anyone who loves God must also love his brother.

Mark 12: 30-31

This is the first [commandment]...you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: You must love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.

Luke 4: 18-19

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

The Qur'an

Verse 55:9

But those who entered the city and the faith before them love those who flee unto them for refuge, and find in their breasts no need for that which has been given to them, but prefer (the refugees) above themselves though poverty become their lot. And who is saved from his own avarice—such are they who are successful.

Verse 16:41

And those who became (refugees) for the cause of God after they had been oppressed. We verily shall give them goodly lodging in the world, and surely the reward of the hereafter is greater, if they but knew.

Verse 24:22

And let not those who possess dignity and ease among you swear not to give to the near of kin and to the needy, and to refugees for the cause of God. Let them forgive and show indulgence. Yearn ye not that God forgive you? God is Forgiving, Merciful.

Verse 4:135

Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for God, even though it be against (the worldly interests) of yourselves or (your) parents or (your)

kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man
or a poor man.

Verse 5:8

Be steadfast witnesses for God in equity, and
let not hatred of any people seduce you that
ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer
to your duty. Observe your duty to God. Lo!
God is Informed of what ye do.

The Dhammapada

Chapter 1:5

"In this world, hate never dispelled hat. Only love dispels hate. This is the law, ancient and
inexhaustible"

Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 6

"When he sees all beings as equal in suffering or in joy because they are like himself, that man
has grown perfect in yoga"

The Analects of Confucius - Chapter 13

"Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy and those who are far off
are attracted to come"

Tao-te-ching

Chapter 13:4

"Love the whole world as if it were your self; then you will truly care for all things."

Call and Response Prayers: there are several, so it is possible to choose
one.

A Prayer for Immigrants

By Jessica Vazquez Torres

Source of Life who is known by many names; Over-turner and illuminator of hearts;

We gather with gratitude for the earth and all who journey in it.

We give thanks for the interconnectedness of all creation.

Support for those without support; Stronghold of those without protection;

We declare openly the times we have fallen short

From living out the call to justice our sacred stories place upon us;

From recognizing the whole of creation as an extension of our being;

From hearing the plight of the creation yearning for justice;

From seeing the harm our way of life and our policies inflict upon the creation.

**Source of Wisdom who is known by many names; The Prophet Mohammed asks: What actions
are most excellent?**

To gladden the heart of a human being;
To feed the hungry;
To help the afflicted;
To lighten the sorrow of the sorrowful;
To remove the wrongs of the injured;
Let us not forget.

The Psalmist asks: Who is fit to hold power and worthy to act in God's place?

Those with a passion for the truth, who are horrified by injustice;
Who act with mercy to the poor and take up the cause of the helpless;
Who have let go of selfish concerns and see the whole creation as sacred.
Let us not forget.

Jesus, carpenter of Nazareth, asks: What is the greatest commandment?

To love your creator; To love your neighbor;
To undermine oppressive powers with life-giving actions;
To be in solidarity with all who suffer;
To act for justice;
And to teach others to act for justice
Let us not forget.

Source of Justice who is known by many names;

Let us not swerve from the path of righteousness that leads to just and equitable relationship.

Open our eyes that we may see the immigrant and undocumented;

Whose labor enables and sustains our living;
The farm worker, the hotel maid, the line cook, the childcare provider, the healthcare worker;

Give us the courage to stand with those crossing our borders;

Escaping economic oppression and political persecution;
Seeking work to support their families;
Aspiring to participate in the bounty of the creation;

Give us the strength to confront the prejudice and intolerance of those who are fearful;

And respond by closing our borders to those who sojourn seeking life and opportunity;

Give us the will to leave behind the safety of our sanctuaries and temples;

And claim our place in the movement to transform the creation;
That our voice, our heart, our spirit will join the voice, heart and spirit of all who demand to live with respect, justice and peace.

Source of Direction who is known by many names;

In our daily living let us be guided;

By the highest estimate of the worth and dignity of every person regardless of their legal status;

And let us not forget;

That the creation is founded on justice; And that we have the moral responsibility to bring forth justice into these times.

Remember the Immigrant

A Prayer for Call-and-Response by Interfaith Worker Justice

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 that

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 could not 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. Our education programs undervalue immigrant children.

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: 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: And a special word to those who employ immigrant farm workers:

All: Make sure immigrants get a day of rest. (Exodus 23:12)

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.

Immigration Litany

Reader: As we come together in prayer, let us remember the word of God, who instructs us to "love the stranger who dwells among you for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt."
(Deuteronomy 10:19)

ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.

Reader: For all those who have come fleeing oppression and persecution:

ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.

Reader: For those who have come fleeing hardship and hunger:

ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.

Reader: For those who have come to join loved ones already here:

ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.

Reader: For those who have come seeking freedom and opportunity:

ALL: God, help us welcome those who have come to dwell among us.

Reader: Let us remember the words of Christ, who said "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (MT 25: 33)

ALL: When, Lord, were you a stranger that we welcomed among us?

Reader: "Truly, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." (MT 25:40)

ALL: When we welcomed the stranger, we welcomed you, Christ Jesus, in our midst!

Reader: Loving God, you call us to create hospitable communities. Help us to overcome any fear and anxiety we may have of those who come from other lands to live among us. Give us the courage and wisdom to create compassionate and just immigration policies. Grant that we may

all live together in peace and love.

ALL: AMEN.

By Pamela Brubaker, Professor of Religion, California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks, California

Poem/Words of Inspiration:

What Shall I Render Unto God?

In a world divided by hatred, render love In a world smashed by fear, render faith.

In a world burdened by ethnic strife in eastern Europe,

Render kindness over cruelty.

In a world torn by the Wall of shame,

Render the refreshing spirit of Glasnost and perestroika.

In a world smeared with the pain of hunger and homelessness, render food and shelter.

In a world tormented by the demons of sexism and racism, render equality and liberty.

In a world cursed by apartheid,

Render the joybells of freedom.

In a world that devalues our children,

Render protection and compassion.

In a world unsure about the future, Render the cup of salvation;

Render the shield of faith. Pay your own vows unto the Lord.

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