

North American Dominican Promoters
of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation

SILENT VOICES BIG TRUTHS

Fostering Gospel Justice and One Human Family

Respect the Lives of Immigrants

We Hold These Truths to be Self-Evident...

...That every human life is sacred and worthy of protection, regardless of immigration status.

Each October in the United States, the Catholic Church celebrates Respect Life Month. As Catholics, we are called to cherish, defend, and protect those who are most vulnerable, from the beginning of life to its end, and at every point in between. During the month of October, as Dominicans reflecting more deeply on the gift of every human life, we should ask ourselves: Is the way our nation is treating immigrants disrespectful not only of their dignity but of their very lives?

In August, the Department of Homeland Security posted a video on social media depicting shackled Black men walking through the rain to board a deportation flight, set to upbeat Haitian music. These images evoke the most painful chapters of our shared history and reduce human beings to objects of humiliation.

In a July radio interview, flight attendant-turned-journalist Gilliam Brockell aired her concerns over the treatment of passengers on just these sorts of deportation flights. She revealed that deportees are routinely denied the kinds of safety measures the rest of us take for granted. One example: remaining shackled for the duration of a flight undermines a person's ability to evacuate in an emergency.

These two stories reveal a shocking disregard for human life. And when people are portrayed in ways that invite ridicule, we should ask whether their inherent dignity is being honored. During Respect Life Month, our Dominican commitment to truth calls us to speak out to ask more of our elected officials who act on our behalf.

Silent Voices, Big Truths lifts up often unheard voices from immigrant communities through short reflections that invite us to encounter truth through the lived experiences of our neighbors.

"What kind of world have we built, if so many brothers and sisters must risk death to seek life?"

~ Pope Leo XIV

"I want to stay here in New York where I can be safe and care for my residents. I cannot return to Haiti. It is not safe. I'm afraid that I would be killed if I return."

A Haitian TPS holder living in the United States (The Guardian)

"We may be immigrants, but we are still human beings."

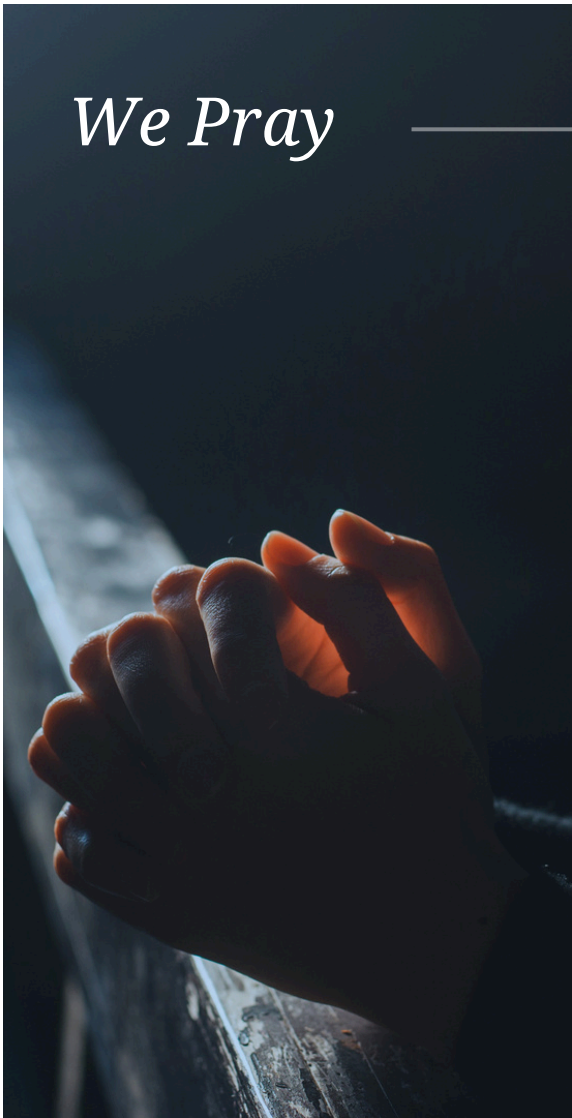
Person detained in immigration detention facility (ACLU)

"I came to this country to pursue my education. I didn't come here to commit a crime or hurt anyone. Yet now I'm walking through the streets of the United States with a GPS monitor on my leg, carrying a feeling of shame and humiliation that I never imagined I would experience."

Pierre B., 20-year-old college student who had been fitted with an ankle monitor, walked into oncoming traffic in an apparent suicide. (PBS Newshour)



We Pray



Keep Us Human

Spirit of Love,
Keep us human in a time when people are being turned into numbers.
Do not let repetition make us numb.
When we hear fifty thousand, help us remember one.
One parent. One child. One neighbor.
One frightened person wondering what comes next.
Hold those who have been taken from their families and communities. Hold the children waiting for parents, the spouses searching for information, the coworkers staring at an empty station, and the neighbors who are afraid that tomorrow someone will come for them.
Give courage to attorneys, advocates, clergy, organizers, journalists and ordinary neighbors who are standing beside them. And give us the moral clarity to recognize cruelty even when it arrives carrying official paperwork.
Keep our hearts tender enough to grieve.
Keep our eyes open enough to see.
Keep our courage strong enough to act.
Remind us that another person's dignity does not diminish our own. Their flourishing does not threaten ours. Their humanity is bound up with ours.
May we become people who refuse to look away. Amen.

~Rev. Cameron Trimble

Call to Action



Contact your members of Congress. Protect the dignity of people in immigration detention because they are human beings, not numbers.

Across the United States, thousands of immigrants are being held in detention centers, often for months while they wait for their cases to be resolved. Reports from people who have experienced detention describe overcrowding, inadequate medical care, poor food and sanitation, limited access to legal counsel, prolonged isolation, and the deep anguish of being separated from family.

Contact your members of Congress. Urge them to demand humane conditions and adequate medical and mental health care in all immigration detention facilities.

Consider including some of the quotes from immigrants in this issue to emphasize the need for this action.

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I pray that we become people who refuse to look away. ~ Sister Sandra Delgado, OP

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Dominican Sisters
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Emboldened by faith, serving with joy