

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)

