

Migrants and Refugees – Education and Reflection Resources

The Catholic Tex-Mex Border Bishops pastoral statement, [*The cry of Christ in the voice of the migrant moves us.*](#)

[LCWR Expresses Deep Concern about Executive Orders](#)

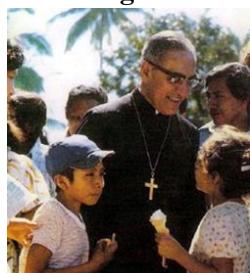
USCCB Migration and Refugee Services has new materials available to assist immigrants who may be targeted for deportation, including “Know Your Rights” videos in English and Spanish, and bilingual materials on “Nine Ways to Protect Yourself” and “Transitioning to a New Administration: How Can We Assist Immigrants and Refugees?”. You can access these materials at JusticeForImmigrants.org.

The [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#) has prepared this [Immigration Raids Rapid Response: For Faith Allies](#) webpage. With clearly stated goals, it offers ways to organize and prepare for people of faith who wish to help immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters.

Our friends at [Church World Service](#) have offered a guide for refugees, "[Know Your Rights](#)." This resource is easy to use, full of example scenarios and contains a host of links to sites with more information.

[ICE Must Respect Places of Worship and Ministry](#) [New Trump Deportation Rules Allow Far More Expulsions](#)

Reflecting on Archbishop Romero and the Current Situation



Archbishop Oscar Romero was a significant figure in El Salvador's history. He is and was looked up to for what he did for that country, especially the poor. He was assassinated while celebrating Mass, March 24, 1980. He truly believed, “when the **church hears the cry of the oppressed** it cannot but denounce the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate the misery from which the cry arises.”

Now, 37 years later in the United States, new Executive Actions raise questions about immigration rights under US immigration laws and the US Constitution. Many of the Central Americans who have been coming since the time of Romero are now living in fear of deportation, of the breakup of their family, and loss of employment. Canada is experiencing a large increase of these immigrants from south of their border moving into their small towns where there isn't adequate provisions. US policies will have far reaching implications. (Pdf for more reflection. Ethel both parts)



Why did Archbishop Romero draw a distinction between “playing politics” and working towards God’s reign?

Why do immigrants come to the United States? Why don't some immigrants come here legally?



One of the primary reasons certain immigrants come to the United States in an undocumented manner is due to the many systemic barriers of our current broken immigration system. Immigrants arrive undocumented because there is an enormous wait or “visa backlog” that prevents them from reunifying with family members currently living in the United States in a timely fashion. Depending on the country of origin, some family members might have to wait for more than a [decade](#) before their visa is processed and for family reunification to occur. Some immigrants arrive at our borders as they are fleeing persecution and seeking protection and cannot safely live in their home countries. Most recently we have seen this in the case of the Northern Triangle countries of El

Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, which have some of the highest murder and crime rates in the world. Lastly some immigrants come to work to support their families but are unable to get a proper work visa because in our current broken immigration system the number of visas for low-wage workers cannot match demand for such workers. As a result, as many as 300,000 undocumented people each year are absorbed into the U.S. workforce.

How have Detention Centers contributed to the immigration situation?

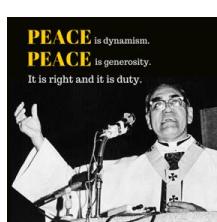
The immigrant detention system contributes to the misconception that immigrants are criminals and a threat to our unity, security and well-being; it engenders despair, divides families, causes asylum-seekers to relive trauma, leads many to forfeit their legal claims, and fails to treat immigrants with dignity and respect. Understanding the dynamics that have led to the increase in the use of immigrant detention as well as moral implications of immigrant detention is an important first step in developing more humane and just enforcement practices.

Are there Sanctuary Cities in the US?

In the wake of recent elections, many cities and mayors have publicly stated that they will renew protections for unauthorized immigrants and sanctuary city policies in their communities. Currently, [mayors](#) of Seattle, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Newark, Providence, and Baltimore have reaffirmed their “sanctuary” policies. While US Conference of Catholic Bishops has never categorically expressed support for or opposition to sanctuary cities, it has spoken out [against](#) specific pieces of legislation that would have curtailed sanctuary city activity.

The U.S. bishops and the teachings of the Catholic Church have consistently respected the right of the sovereign state to control its borders – it functions as one of the principles in their pastoral letter [Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](#). However, the Church, along with other members of civil society, has the right to work to change laws which are believed to violate basic human dignity, imbued by the Creator. In the case of immigration, the [U.S. bishops](#) believe that the broken U.S. immigration system unjustly separates families, denies due process and contributes to the exploitation of immigrant workers in the workplace.

<http://justiceforimmigrants.org/what-we-are-working-on/immigration/sanctuary-cities-backgrounder/>



Quotations of Romero for reflection

"God's reign is already present on our earth in mystery. When the Lord comes, it will be brought to perfection. That is the hope that inspires Christians. We know that every effort to better society, especially when injustice and sin are so ingrained, is an effort that God blesses, that God wants, that God demands of us."

"Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty."

"Many would like the poor to keep on saying that it is God's will for them to live that way. But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God. God's will is that all his children be happy."

For more reflection on Archbishop Romero –

<https://educationforjustice.org/resources/creative-voice-remembering-monse%C3%B1or-oscar-romero>
<https://educationforjustice.org/resources/blessed-%C3%B3scar-romero-life-remembered>