

Second Sunday in Lent Year C

Prayer: May this Lenten season give us the space to dwell in the truth of love and compassion

I am Ana Reza. I work in your name, as members of the diocese of the Rio Grande to bring our love and compassion to our border region. In collaboration with many great churches, clergy, organizations, city and county partners. My official title is Bridge Chaplain, I am not ordained. I have been in this position for 5 years this month.

This position was created five years ago, in the guide of convention resolutions that call to support the work on the border, in our cities that provide dignity and safe space for those seeking asylum and legal status. God has allowed me to be present with other organizations, with our churches throughout the diocese and other dioceses. To do the work of bringing love in a place of violence like our borders, as migrants are criminalized.

The creation of my position was on the other side of the bridge, helping Mexicans seeking asylum, seeking support from the violence of their cities, towns and state. Our government ignored them and they suffered as they waited for a chance to share their stories. Rev. Cristina Rathbone, from the diocese of Boston was on a call from God to go see what is happening on our border, especially after hearing all the policies and reality of criminalizing migrants. She helped call our churches to be part of the community of support. She just came

out with a book, *The Asylum Seekers, A Chronicle of Life, Death and Community at the border*. She was at the Cathedral yesterday along with Myself and Canon Lee on a panel discussion and will preach today at the 11am mass at the cathedral, look it up. She will be at our next RGBM community meeting that happens every 2nd Friday of the month, next one on April 11. She will talk about her book then after Easter we will have a book study on the book. Share your contact info and I will keep you posted.

At the 81st General Convention our church passed, "Migration with Dignity" the first thing it states is that we are ALL created in the image of God and to respect the dignity of everyone. The dignity framework is A universal right of movement, the right to be secure, the right to equality, rights to basic quality of life, the right to access services and the right to access civil and political rights. It states: 81st General Convention affirm Migration with Dignity as a framework to guide ministry with migrants, calling upon all Episcopalians, congregations, and dioceses to make urgent efforts through direct action to support arriving migrants' immediate needs for shelter, food, clothing, legal assistance, work permits, healthcare, transportation, etc. and to advocate for Migration with Dignity to local, state, national, and international governing bodies exhorting them to enforce existing laws and policies that uphold these principles on behalf of refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and displaced persons, and by enacting

new laws and policies guaranteeing their welcome, protection, and integration into our common human journey;

Please read the rest. It is a communal commitment to love migrants, refugees and asylum seekers as they are currently being criminalized, leading to violence to vulnerable people.

Undocumented immigrants pay nearly \$100 billion in taxes. We need to speak out to our communities to respect the migrant community. Lets give a public peace sign.

During Lent we commit to clear the path to be able to understand God's call to love all. We are kind and loving to ourselves and to those around us. And then the fear is cast out, as we hear do not be afraid. The resolutions in our diocese that passed were affirming resolutions, Offering Sacred Welcoming to Immigrants and Refugees, Migration with dignity, in support of the national resolution and Engaging in Immigration Detention ministry.

There is a local organization that has been organizing to end detention centers in New Mexico, last year they got very close. I was with them at the State Capital along with leaders of St. Micheal and all angels. Detention centers are jail and we are putting vulnerable people in these cages. Some have died. Two cases of children during the present administration previous term, Jakelin, a seven year old girl, died of bacterial infection, Felipe, a eight year old died of complications

of influenza, both from indigenous communities, vulnerable people in these harsh places.

It is our call, our opportunity to support and choose to connect with organizations who have been doing this kind of work, of welcoming with dignity. Today at the Education hour, I will be presenting with more detail the work of Rio Grande Borderland Ministry and Sarah Camp, a congregation member, will also present about her organization that works with these families. Please join us.

During Lent we seek the truth. The truth Christ died for, that we are all made in the image of God so these families and individuals are not criminals they are asking for asylum, asking for legal status. Their hope is to be free of suffering and violence. They seek compassion.

In scripture we are reminded that the glory we have here on earth is not the same as God gave us, death on a cross. Are we seeking to be as obedient as Jesus was as he seeks to bring the kingdom of God. Or are we being pulled by the earthly things: the belly, the hunger of things, money. The power we hold to bring good to our world is how we spend our money and how we organize with our faith community, our civic groups, and community organizations. Let's not support companies that make money off this suffering, let's vote, let's run for office, let's advocate. We believe God will be with us in the suffering and give us support. We are sent out to be the light in the darkness. Amen.

