

Prayers for immigrants

Submitted by Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration,
FSPA affiliates, prayer partners and partners in mission



This is a crucifix made by Eduardo Rahbe who lives in Southern Arizona in the town of Elfrida. He was born in Venezuela of parents who were from the Middle East. He has been in the United States for a long time. He is legally blind and makes the crosses as his morning meditation. This was given from Eduardo to Brother David and he passed it to the Poverello House Tucson which he founded.

-January-February 2025



Original Prayers

Dear God, Angels & Saints,

Our beautiful country that has been filled with your families from all over your world for generations, we humbly ask your help in continuing to welcome people in need so that our wonderful abundance can be shared.

Help us to care for one another, to be sensitive to those already present, and to spread your marvelous gifts among our sisters and brothers. With open hearts, hands to help and gratitude for your blessings, we pray for your assistance, guidance and strength. Amen.

—Celesta Day, FSPA



Foxes have dens & birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.

Matthew 8:20

Spirit of Love,

Help us to see our friend Jesus in all those who long for a place to lay their heads ...

Help us remember we are a country of immigrants and to recall the truth and joy of living as one body in this world God loves so much ...

Help us listen in love to the stories of all who are afraid ... and all who long for justice ... with the compassion that flows so generously from You. Amen.

—Karna Marks, partner in mission



Oh God,

You know and are in the hearts and fears of all those who are fleeing from horrors of war, persecution, violence, poverty, hatred and whatever destroys life. You know all that has happened in the lives of all people. You know what it means

to be estranged in a foreign country, being sought after, not able to stay rooted in your own created land.

It's terrifying to imagine getting up each day, living in fear of being hunted down, snatched up because of who you are and how you are searching for a better life.

It's hard to perceive a life filled with energy, hope and dreams suddenly snuffed out because of others' hatred and fears.

We ask you to surround all immigrants, refugees with total protection and safety.

Give us, as companions, the strength to walk with and stand in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters. We are all your children, Oh God. We need you now, more than ever.

Amen.

—Kathy Roberg, FSPA



O God of the Universe who so loved mankind, Grant us, in this Year of Hope, to care for and nurture all people of the earth.

Open our heart to hear the plight of the poor, the immigrant.

As we walk together along the Emmaus road of life,

May we, through our prayer and action, give hope and strength to the impoverished, the immigrant.

Enable them to stand tall and be met with justice and love.

May peace abound in our beings. Amen.

—Joan Gerhards, FSPA affiliate



Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift that satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace:

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brothers and sisters;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance, as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family, a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity, in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

—Carol Knapp, FSPA affiliate



Lord, I know that fear is the work of the devil, and yet I have not conquered this fear I have for our country. I ask that you relax my thoughts and open my heart to You. That I might experience Your peace and love.

Help me to trust You completely and place our very fragile country in Your hands today. Heal the divisions, the hate and the greed that is poisoning our country.

Restore our democracy.

And rid us of the works of the devil that are choking our freedom. Amen.

—Mary Mell, FSPA affiliate



Prayer for the Immigrant Needleworker

Loving God,
You who guide us through every journey,
bless the hands of this immigrant,
who stitches her story into every thread.

Grant her strength in her labor,
peace in her solitude
and hope in her heart as she creates.

May each needle's pull be a reminder
that she is weaving a future filled with purpose.

Bless her work, O Lord,
and let it bring both sustenance and joy.

Through her craft, may she find connection,
dignity, and the promise of brighter days
ahead. Amen.

—Meg Paulino, FSPA affiliate and partner
in mission (with ChatGPT)



As our blessed St. Francis and St. Clare opened their arms to differences – We beseech you Heavenly Father to:

- Open the eyes of our leaders to need and suffering of immigrants;
- Open the ears of the indifferent to the cry of immigrants;
- Open the hearts of all to embrace our fellow humankind filled with your love and acceptance.

Fill our world with the compassion and love for each other as shown by our Saints Francis and Clare. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

—Bernadette Ostby, FSPA affiliate



Let us be humble and be the living Christ to those on the margins. Let us pray for strength to be the calm in their storm, however we are able.

—Lavina Taylor, FSPA affiliate



“And the angel told Joseph to take Mary and the Child and flee...”

What a frightening command, what uncertainty, what a plethora of unknown, what risks!

The flight of Joseph and Mary is repeated in so many ways, so many places in the world.

The greed, hatred, bigotry, ego of today are but mutations of what was theirs to endure: risking safety, freedom, a better life.

For to the emigrant, the immigrant, the refugee, all in the danger of leaving their homeland, countless the tragedies, Mary and Joseph, protect them, be with them and all the generous, courageous and compassionate who welcome and provide assistance.

The children, separated from parents and families, frightened by the armed guards, a language that means nothing. They must feel, “Sometimes I feel like a motherless child...a long way from home.”

Mary and Joseph, you know so well this terror of being driven from your homeland. In this time of political exploitation, hear the cry of the children and their families. Come to their aid, grant them your protection, guidance and abiding care.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

—Rita Heires, FSPA



Prayer to St. Gabriel:

St. Gabriel, guide and protector, we beseech you to “angel” the many people around the world who experience the horrors of being forced from their home, bereft and deprived beyond what our minds and hearts can imagine.

For those responding with generous hearts and open hands give protection and courage to “feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless...”

Open the minds and hearts of those leaders, who are imposing inhumane conditions to fellow humans and the destructive decisions for our Mother Earth, to come to understand all as brothers and sisters, precious and good.

St. Gabriel, protect, guide and graciously hear our prayers. Lead us all to “peace on earth and let it begin with me.”

Amen.

—Rita Heires, FSPA



Other Contributions

AWAKEN US

Lord of all hopefulness, awaken us.
Show us the meaning in our toil
That we may ever rejoice in the promise of
the seeds we sow.

Lord of all righteousness, awaken us.
Show us the good path
That we may walk in confidence in Your
wisdom and understanding.

Lord of all hospitality, awaken us.
Show us the refuge of eagles' wings
That we may always be people of shelter in
times of storm.

Lord of all freedom, awaken us.
Show us the courage that called our
forefathers out of bondage
That we may always stand with the bound
and the oppressed, and be their champions.

Lord of all peace, awaken us.
Show us the heart that stills even raging waters
That we may make still raging hearts, and
reconcile warring neighbors.

Lord of all charity, awaken us.
Teach us of the unending return on our
sacrifice
That we may rejoice more fully in our giving.

Lord you have eyes for the just and ears for
their cry.
Awaken in us a heart of justice
That you may count us among their number.
Amen.

—Catholic Relief Services



Episcopal Bishop, Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, publicly called out Trump to his face at an inaugural service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

“Let me make one final plea, Mr. President. Millions have put their trust in you, and as you told the nation yesterday, you have felt the providential hand of a loving God. In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now. There are gay, lesbian, and transgender children in Democratic, Republican, and independent families, some who fear for their lives. The people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings, who labor in poultry farms and meatpacking plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the night shifts in hospitals, they may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes and are good neighbors. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwara, and temples.

I ask you to have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear their parents will be taken away, and that you help those who are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands to find compassion and welcome here. Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger, for we were all once strangers in this land. May God grant us the strength and courage to honor the dignity of every human being, to speak the truth to one another in love, and walk humbly with each other and our God, for the good of all people, the good of all people in this nation and the world. Amen.”

—Submitted by Sue Lund, FSPA affiliate



"What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like."

—St. Augustine

—Submitted by Lavina Taylor, FSPA affiliate



A Migrant's Prayer:

"From the bottom of my heart, I give thanks to you, Lord, for being so good to me and for giving me another chance at life. Also, I know, everything you do for me is in my best interest. Your love for me is vast. All this evidence you put before me, strong evidence, is to find out how strong my faith toward you is. Today I humble myself toward you and repent for all the ways I've been bad to you. I pray for you to take away from me all the bad that exists in me and not separate yourself from me for one minute. Guide me down the road of good and look after me and all my loved ones. You alone are perfect and full of goodness. Thank you for your patience, for your calm, and for listening to me. Thank you, Jesus."

—Taken from the book "Voices of the Border," Chapter 12 Spiritual Life, page 188. '

—Submitted by Lavina Taylor, FSPA affiliate



"I was at the border wall yesterday. I can't forget the face of 4 unaccompanied kids aged 15-17. We met a total of 25 asylum seeking people, from as far away as Bangladesh, India, Lebanon, Peru, Mexico and Guatemala."

Pray for me. I left my home far to the south. I could no longer make a living at home.

My crops have failed year after year. I crossed many borders to come to this Wall. I sold everything I owned to find the money to pay for the trip. All of my hope is for a better life on the other side of the Wall. I only want to work and be safe. Pray for me.

Pray for me. I have lived in your country, in the shadows, underground, working hard for less than minimum wage. I have cleaned your toilets. I have processed the chickens you eat. I have picked the vegetables for your salad. You don't know me. You don't see me, even though I have been your neighbor for 20 years. Pray for me.

Pray for me. My children are citizens of the United States. They are teenagers. We are all afraid. They wouldn't know how to live in Mexico. They don't even speak fluent Spanish. What will happen if I am deported? Pray for me.

Pray for me. I have come here alone. I am 16 years old. My parents are afraid of what will happen to me if I stay in my country. The cartels want my body. I have left my friends and family. I don't know anyone in the United States. Pray for me.

Let us pray for the "stranger among us." Let us pray for those who work to defend their rights.

Let us pray for the people who have the power to determine the fate of our brothers and sisters who lack the proper papers. May their hearts be filled with mercy, because the "stranger among us" is none other than Christ. Amen.

—Written by Jeanette Arnquist, Board of Directors Tucson Poverello House

—Submitted by Lavina Taylor, FSPA affiliate



Attributed to Oscar Romero

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection, no pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers not master builders.

Ministers not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.

—Submitted by Marianna Ableidinger, FSPA



Pope Francis' Prayer for the 2023 World Migration Day

God, Father Almighty, grant us the grace to work tirelessly for justice, solidarity, and peace, so that all your children may enjoy the freedom to choose whether to migrate or stay.

Grant us the courage to denounce all the horrors of our world, and to combat every injustice that mars the beauty of your children and the harmony of our common home.

Sustain us by the power of your Spirit, so that we can reflect your tender love to every migrant whom you place in our path, and to spread in hearts and in every situation the culture of encounter and care.

—Submitted by Karen Kappell, FSPA

