ASH WEDNESDAY





Photos from Franciscan Action Network, Fast4Families in DC, 2014

"This Is the Fasting That I Wish..." Isaiah 58:6

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015

The penitential season of Lent begins with a call to fast and imposition of ashes to remind us that we are creatures of Earth. While we fast FROM food to purify ourselves spiritually, we can fast FOR immigrant families who continue to suffer under the broken immigration system of our country. Reflect on words from Scripture that describe true fasting.

Isaiah 58: 6 -10

"This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see the, and not turning your back on your own. . . . If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech; If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday; Then the Lord will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land."

Reflection

In 2015, Lent will be a particularly challenging time for those working with and on behalf of immigrants and refugees. The first measures introduced by the House in the 114th Congress were anti-immigrant bills tied to funding for DHS (Department of Homeland Security) and the Secure Our Borders First Act, H.R. 399 introduced by Rep. McCaul (R-TX). Instead of calling for comprehensive immigration reform as we did last year, we must focus on challenging bills that harm families from policy and moral perspectives, as well as continue to advocate on behalf of families. The prophets, like Isaiah, remind us that more important than refraining from food is working to "release those bound unjustly," "setting free the oppressed," which today applies to freeing immigrants and refugees from the bonds of a broken immigration system.

Prayer

God, we confess that we have not loved you with all our heart, mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. As we begin the season of Lent, we ask you to accept our repentance today for our complicity in allowing neglect of civil and human rights. We pray that the minds of hearts of our legislative decision makers may turn from indifference and hostility toward immigrants and refugees toward compassion and justice on their behalf. May our Lenten fasting and prayer strengthen our resolve to continue to work for immigrant justice despite the obstacles we face.

Action

Commit to an Ash Wednesday fast appropriate for you, and make a call to your Representative in Congress at 1-866-940-2439 to express your support for immigrant families and opposition to legislation that would stand in the way of expanded eligibility for the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program and prevent a DAPA (Deferred Action for Parental Accountability) expansion.