

Peace Is In Inclusive Communities

Acts 1:1-11 ***“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses ... to the ends of the earth.”***

Ephesians 1: 17-23 ***“May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call...”***

Matthew 28: 16-20 ***“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, ...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”***

Reflection

- The Scriptures today tell us that we are called to be witnesses to the ends of the earth, to make disciples of all the nations. As followers of Christ, we are to embrace and care for all people, regardless of background or place of origin.
- How inclusive is our community? Do those who are different or new feel welcomed and at home?**
- Inclusion in community is about understanding that “my” way or “our” way is not the only way. Are we open to others’ ideas, ready to listen to their story, willing to place ourselves in their shoes?
- Have I educated myself about Immigration and our country’s policies?

Consider:

- 1.) Approximately 75% of all immigrants have legal permanent visas.¹ Of the 25% that are undocumented or “illegal,” which amounts to 12 million people, 40% have overstayed temporary visas.
- 2.) The U.S. Immigration system is complicated and bureaucratic; the laws often make it difficult for people to adjust their status. For example, sometimes people are told they must return to their country of origin for 10 years in order to ‘correct’ their status. We must consider what that means to those who have established a life and family here, and why they came.
- 3.) Our country’s economy needs workers, especially unskilled workers, from other countries. For every 3 Americans who retire, there is only one to replace him/her. Our birth rate is down; our population is declining. Contrary to popular myth, immigrant workers do not take away jobs from U.S. workers.
- 4.) “Most people who enter this country, documented or undocumented, are simply seeking to improve the quality of life for themselves and for their loved ones.”² We are a nation of immigrants. What was the experience of your family or ancestors who came to this country?

Action

- Learn more! Go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org , www.crs.org/publicpolicy/migration.cfm , www.usccb.org/mrs/ . Sign up on their “Take Action” mailing lists so that you can make a difference when legislation comes up.**
- Share the truth with others about immigrants; dispel misconceptions as they come up in conversation, so that fear and suspicion are quelled.**
- Warmly greet those around you before and/or after Mass. Learn the names of those whom you do not know.**
- Share ideas with your Pastoral Council about how you can make your parish a place where all people can feel at home.**

¹ INS Statistical Yearbook

² Nan Ouest, 3rd yr. LEM student, in The Seed, Social Justice Awareness Newsletter, Diocese of Gary.