



## DEVOTIONS

*linking our scriptural call to welcome migrants with the suffering journey of Jesus, and the hope to transform walls into hospitable and just relationships.*

**Ash Wednesday**--Walls Built First in Our Hearts

**Week 1 Lent**—Walls and Separation of Families

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**Week 3 Lent**—Walls and Root Causes of Migration

**Week 4 Lent**—Walls Hurt Border Communities

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**Palm Sunday**—Walls Increase Suffering of Indigenous Groups

**Easter**—Our Faith Calls Us to Break Down Walls & Build Unity

*Devotions available online at: <http://bit.ly/IICHolyDays>*

*See our complementary resource at: <http://bit.ly/IICBorderWallFaithBkgrounder>*

INTERFAITH  
IMMIGRATION  
COALITION

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*Reflections linking our scriptural call to welcome migrants with the suffering journey of Jesus, & the hope to transform walls into hospitable and just relationships.*

## **Ash Wednesday—Walls Built First in Our Hearts**

**Scripture:** *“Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord, your God.” Joel 2: 12-13*



**Reflection:** “Something there is that doesn’t love a wall. . .” reflects poet Robert Frost in “Mending Wall.” Although he walks the line with his neighbor for annual mending of the wall, he questions the need for the wall. But his neighbor insists, “Good fences make good neighbors.” The poet muses: “Before I built a wall I’d ask to know/What I was walling in or walling out/And to whom I was like to give offence.” Thoughts for our country to ponder today as the administration insists on spending billions of dollars to extend the existing wall on our southern border.

*(Photo by Brandon Qvester/inewsourc, in: <https://www.kqed.org/news/11630641/americas-wall-the-decades-long-struggle-to-secure-the-u-s-mexico-border>)*

There are different kinds of walls—physical, attitudinal, emotional—and different purposes. When does a wall, or fence, make good neighbors, and when is it an obstacle to relationships? Who does it wall in or wall out? To whom is it offensive, even harmful? In this Lenten series, we will be invited to reflection, prayer, and action through the lens of aspects of the wall on our southern border and its impact on border communities, families, environment, use of public funds, & indigenous communities. On Ash Wednesday, we hear the prophet Joel call the community to acknowledge ways they have damaged their relationship with God and each other. They are urged to repent through fasting, weeping, and mourning: “Rend your hearts. . . and return to the Lord, your God.” Then their relationship with God will be restored. Before we consider impacts of a physical wall, we are invited to a search of our minds and hearts. What walls have I built that prevent me from fully loving God, myself, and others? Do I build inner walls or approve physical barriers out of fear of those whose language, culture, skin color are different from mine? Or is there something in me that “doesn’t love a wall/That wants it down”?

**Story:** Sister Norma Pimentel, on National Public Radio on Jan. 13, 2019, said: “I’m director for Catholic Charities here in the Rio Grande Valley, overseeing the humanitarian response that we have here in our border. . . Sadly, when we hear all these narratives of the importance of wall and sending out criminals and protecting us from crime and all these ugly people that are coming I realize that they’re failing to see a part of the immigration reality that we see on a daily basis—people who are just like us, who are suffering and hurting and in need of great help. I believe what (Pope Francis) speaks to us about—the importance of building bridges and not walls.”

**Actions/Resources:**

1. Reach out to mend a ruptured personal relationship.
2. Consider to whom the southern border wall gives offense and why.
3. Learn more at: <http://bit.ly/IICBorderWallFaithBkgrounder> about the impacts of the wall and its relationship with our faith values. Thanks to our Mennonite, Columban, and other faith partners who developed the resource.

**Prayer:** With the psalmist in Psalm 51, we pray: “A clean heart create for me, O God; renew in me a steadfast spirit.” Give me the grace to acknowledge any walls I have built in my heart, and to tear them down and build a bridge. *Amen.*



*Devotion by Sister Marie Lucey, Franciscan Action Network*

*For questions about this resource, contact Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, [ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:ssstanley@dhm.disciples.org). Devotions online at: <http://bit.ly/IICHolyDays>. See our related resource at: <http://bit.ly/IICBorderWallFaithBkgrounder>.*



Turning Walls into Welcome

2019



Reflections linking our scriptural call to welcome migrants with the suffering journey of Jesus, & the hope to transform walls into hospitable and just relationships.

**Week 1 Lent—Walls and Separation of Families**

**Scripture:** “When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us we cried to the Lord. . . He brought us out of Egypt. . and gave us this land flowing with milk and honey. . . Then you and your family, together with the Levite and the aliens who live among you, shall make merry over all the good things which the Lord, your God , has given you.” Deuteronomy 6, 8, 11.

**Reflection:** When the Israelites were brought out of oppression in Egypt, they were not met with a wall. They migrated as families into a land where they would be more free and safe. Today, families, mostly women and children who flee violence, oppression, and poverty in their home countries, and seek asylum in the United States at our southern border, have been met with physical walls and/or walls of harsh immigration policies. Since August, 2017, service providers have seen a sharp increase in referrals of separated children and witnessed the severe trauma children experience in being torn from their parents. Under this administration’s “Zero Tolerance” policy thousands of children were separated from parents. Even since family separations were halted under court order in June, 2018, unjust separations have not entirely ended. Many adult immigrants are prosecuted and either deported or kept in detention. Service organizations, like Catholic Charities and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, work to reunify families. A federal judge has ordered the government to fully account for all migrant families separated before and after the “Zero Tolerance” policy, and to reunite the nearly 3,000 children held in Health and Human Services care. Yet, records were not even kept in many cases, so some families may never be reunited. During a House Judiciary Hearing on February 26<sup>th</sup>, committee members called separation of children unjustifiable both morally and legally. They will issue a subpoena for government records.



**Story:** For six days after being separated from their mother at the border, Franklin, an 11 year old Honduran boy, and his 7 year old brother Byron slept very little and were constantly cold as they huddled under foil sheet blankets. With their mother, Gloria, they were seeking asylum after repeated death threats in Honduras. Franklin told NBC News, “We would pray together and ask God that everything would be okay.” These boys and thousands of separated children gave accounts of being brutally cold, given inedible food, and being verbally abused by guards. Worst of all, was the emotional trauma of being

separated—*anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, depression.* Franklin and Byron were eventually sent to live with a foster family in New York, but were not reunited with their mother until after six weeks.

**Actions/Resources:**

1. Ask your Representative in Congress to co-sponsor the Keep Families Together Act, re-introduced in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress by Rep. Jerry Nadler chair of the House Judiciary Committee.
2. View <https://www.familiesbelongtogether.org/> website for ways to respond to family separation.

**Prayer:** O God, you have upheld the sacredness of human families since You created the first family, and even became one of us in a human family, we pray for reunification of all separated children with their families, and we pray that these traumatized children may be helped to find healing. May reunified families be given asylum and “make merry” in this country. *Amen.*



Devotion by Sister Marie Lucey, Franciscan Action Network

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**Week 2 Lent—Walls and Our Public Funds**

**Scripture:** "...He (Jesus ) took Peter, John and James with Him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning...While He was speaking, a cloud appeared and.... A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to Him.'" Luke 9:28-35

**Reflection:** Prior to The Transfiguration, Jesus had already revealed who He was to the world by what He did. Through miraculous acts of love, Jesus manifested God to humanity. On the mountain, God acknowledges His own glorious nature in Jesus and beckons us to 'listen', go, and do likewise. God proudly claims us as His own when we act as a bridges to His love.

Instead of bridges, political leaders promote funding for more walls. Border walls destroy the ecosystem and economy of the border towns; force vulnerable immigrants to take more dangerous routes; and provide no actual, additional safety or deterrence of refugee flow. Additional funding for the border wall is a blinding manifestation of immoral politics, cultural exclusion and unwarranted fear. It reveals to the world that we are a fearful, immoral people because, like Jesus, what we do reveals what we are. Promoting this wall is an epic failure to act in a way that God could claim as *His own*. Jesus revealed God's desire for us to act as bridges to love, compassion and unity so that all might see the reality of a loving God. Fearful, insecure humans build ineffective walls that will serve as mirrors to reflect the reality of what they have become. As St. Vincent de Paul reminded us, the wisdom of God will always prevail while the wisdom of humans will surely fail.

**Story:** Yuma Sector surveillance cameras captured an unidentified person assisting a family of six undocumented people over an 18-foot border wall near the San Luis Port of Entry. The family surrendered to Customs and Border Protection agents and were promptly arrested and detained. The family included a 2-year-old, a 7-year-old and a 10-year-old, according to the agency. The toddler and the 7 year old were seen on a video being dropped from over the wall to the older members of the family by another individual who remained on the Mexican side, Customs and Border Protection reported. The toddler head butted one of the adults and suffered a facial injury. Who, in this story, will God recognize as His own?

**Actions/Resources:**

1. Call your Members of Congress and oppose any funding for a border wall; identify it as an ineffective security measure that increases fear and uses excessive public funds.
2. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper that highlights how your faith values reject excessive spending on a border wall and ask your neighbors to do the same.
3. Ask your local Church leadership to partner with a border congregation and assist them as they minister with immigrants. (Image is of a boy being crossed over a separation barrier in Turkey, from: <https://static.businessinsider.com/image/557ee83c6bb3f74a4699cdd0/image.jpg>)



**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, we want to be followers of your Son, who manifested your glory to the world. As you are pleased to acknowledge us as Your own when we act with love, please bestow on us your courageous altruism to act on behalf of our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Equip Your children with the tools that will enable us to build bridges to compassion and to deconstruct immoral walls of division. *Amen.*



Devotion by Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Daughters of Charity & NETWORK Lobby

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*Reflections linking our scriptural call to welcome migrants with the suffering journey of Jesus, & the hope to transform walls into hospitable and just relationships.*  
**Week 3 Lent—Walls and Root Causes of Migration**

**Scripture:** “Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.’” (Luke 13:1-3)

**Reflection:** Luke 13 will likely never be a preferred “bedtime story”. Opening with separate accounts of disasters, the crowd seeks Jesus’ input on two horrors that have left the community confused and terrified; the brutal state killings by the ruler Pilate of a group of Galilean pilgrims who’d traveled in faith to Jerusalem, and the Siloam tower collapse that flattened eighteen Jerusalemites without warning. But Jesus quickly clarified his view that the Galileans murdered were no more sinful, and the tower accident victims were no more guilty, than any of those telling him about the tragedies. Indeed, Jesus urged the crowd to not just talk about the pain others had endured, and not just feel fortunate (or maybe even deserving, somehow?) that the same fate hadn’t befallen them. Instead, Jesus called them to repent, to focus on changing their own perspectives—and to become transformed, perhaps, to show even greater compassion towards ones whose lives are harmed by inequities, disasters, and pain. Similarly, might Jesus today warn us to not just talk about tragedies of migrants among us, but to repent from & change ways we may be involved in systemic economic, environmental, or political violence that makes it persons need to flee their homelands?

**Story:** In early March, 29 Central American parents whose children were among the 2,900 systematically separated from them at the border nearly a year ago, re-entered the U.S. Accompanied by local religious leaders, advocates, & the legal group “Al Otro Lado” (“to the other side”), they’ve arrived determined to seek a second chance for refuge as asylees, and to be reunited again—finally—with their children. The 29 parents were among 430 deported in recent months without their children. Over 200 remain separated still. One father among the “re-arrivals” is Santos Canelas, who fled Honduras with his 16 year old daughter last Spring “after gang members threatened to assault her.” He knows dangers remain for his family in Honduras, and so came back to the U.S., telling the *Washington Post* that “without my daughter, I’m dead inside.” His daughter now lives with a cousin in New Orleans. Read at:



<https://wapo.st/2Xx1953>. (Picture at L. from Ann Scholz, LCWR, at an interfaith prayer service in Sunland Park, NM, on border between El Paso & Juarez.)

### **Actions/Resources:**

1. Continue learning about the root causes of migration through resources like this: <https://www.wola.org/analysis/9-questions-answers-central-american-migrant-caravan/>, & this: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/el-salvador-civil-war-natural-disasters-and-gang-violence-drive-migration>.
2. Consider studying in Honduras about root causes of Central American Refugees at: <http://www.share-elsalvador.org/honduras-tour-and-delegation.html>, or in El Salvador at: <https://www.cristosal.org/global-school-human-rights-seminars>.
3. Study statements of faith leaders at: [www.interfaithimmigration.org/2018/10/30/faith-leaders-voice-staunch-support-for-asylum-seekers-urge-president-to-uphold-protections-for-vulnerable-families-and-individuals/](http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2018/10/30/faith-leaders-voice-staunch-support-for-asylum-seekers-urge-president-to-uphold-protections-for-vulnerable-families-and-individuals/), and read more here: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/faith-leaders-call-us-address-complicity-causing-migrant-caravan>. Then, call your legislators (202- 224-3121) to urge opportunities for asylum seekers who have fled dangerous root causes.

**Prayer:** God, let us not only be grateful if tragedies have escaped us. Let us also be transformed by your grace to repent of ways we are implicated in unjust policies that lead to tragedies upon others. Offer protection to those seeking new life. *Amen.*

*Devotion by Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries*



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**Week 4 Lent—Walls Hurt Border Communities**

**Scripture:** *“All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself . . . and given us the ministry of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18)*

**Reflection:** We are called in Christ to be the reconciling love of God in a world where much is broken. We have set nation against nation. We have divided neighbor from neighbor and turned upon each other demonizing those who are different from ourselves. We have forgotten the lessons of our elders about respect and love for those labeled “other.” We have built walls where the God of abundant love would instead have us construct bridges.

**Story:** If you visit our Southern border today, in many places you will be met by miles of fencing designed to wall out those some have labeled “other.” For as far as the eye can see the wall is both symbol and reality, dividing families, friends, neighbors, and whole communities, and walling off one from the other.

It was not always so. Old timers, and even the not-so-old, remember the time before the wall when children played in open fields, livestock wandered the borderland, and families crossed easily for christenings, weddings, and burials. Thousands still cross each day to work or shop or go to school. They wait in long lines to visit their abuelas in the south or their brothers in the north. Cities and towns across the Southwest are inextricably linked by history, culture, economy, and blood. It is true of Tijuana and San Diego, Agua Prieta and Douglas, Juarez and El Paso, and Nogales, Sonora and Nogales, Arizona. These are communities that have been walled off from each other by the fear of a few in powerful places. It is to these that we are called to be the reconciling presence of God’s abundant love.

**Actions/Resources:**



1. Pope Francis urges us, as he implored the young people at World Youth Day 2019, to be builders of bridges of encounter, not "builders of walls that sow fear & look to divide and box people in." Commit to build human bridges. Reach out to immigrants in your own community. Listen and learn together to build bridges of God’s reconciling love.
2. Call your members of Congress (**202- 224-3121**) and remind them that building additional barriers along our southern border is morally dubious, a colossal waste of resources, and ultimately ineffective. Border barriers will cut through public lands threatening the environment and historic properties, and will divide families and communities. A lasting solution requires that we deal

with the root causes that force migrants from their homes including violence, corruption, and endemic poverty—some of it of our nation’s making.

3. Learn more about life in border communities: Read the New York Times article, *Life on the Border*. Read Cleveland.com’s, *Desperation on the Arizona-Mexico Border*. (Photo of binational mass concelebrated in Douglas, AZ & Agua Prieta, Sonora, with Bishop Jose Leopoldo Gonzalez, at Left in U.S., & Bishop Gerald F. Kincanas at Right in MX. Photo by Ann Scholz.)

**Prayer:** God of abundant love, you who have reconciled us to yourself, open our arms and our hearts to all your peoples and make of us builders of bridges of your reconciling love. Amen.

*Devotion by Sister Ann Scholz, Leadership Conference of Women Religious*



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**Week 5 Lent—Walls Cause Environmental Harms**

**Scripture:** "See, I am doing something new! Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? In the desert I make a way, in the wasteland, rivers. Wild beasts honor me, jackals and ostriches, for I put water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland for my chosen people to drink, the people whom I formed for myself, that they might announce my praise." Isaiah 43:19-21

**Reflection:** So very often as we reflect on Scripture we do not emphasize enough how connected we are with nature and that we are called to take care of each other, plants and animals. We are one big family created for the praise of God. In these days, as walls are on our collective minds, we cannot avoid noticing that our Mother Earth has no walls. Everything flows beautifully and everybody can enjoy the abundance of her gifts. Dividing and closing in were not what God intended when promising water in the desert and rivers in the wasteland. Building the wall will cause flooding and other environmental harms. New construction, justified by heated rhetoric over border security, will undermine longstanding human health and environmental protections. Nearly one-third of the U.S. border lies in public hands, including national wildlife refuges, national parks, and national forests. **Fencing and walls, while doing little to stop human migration, are effectively severing wildlife migration routes and destroying thousands of acres of natural habitat.** Further construction will only serve to exacerbate the destruction of God's creation. How can we announce God's praise in the midst of environmental harms?



(Photo: National Butterfly Center)

**Story:** The 100-acre National Butterfly Center is the premier location in the United States to experience the beauty, drama and emotion of wild butterflies. A project of the nonprofit North American Butterfly Association, the center is designed to attract incredible numbers of beautiful, wild butterflies. Clouds of butterflies may be found at the National Butterfly Center because, by planting thousands of plants that the butterflies need for nectar and for caterpillar growth, we have created an outdoor paradise that sustains large populations and hundreds of species of wild butterflies. What will the border wall do here? It would eradicate an enormous amount of native habitat, including host plants for butterflies, breeding and feeding areas for wildlife and lands set aside for conservation of endangered and threatened species – including species that migrate North to South through this area or over-winter.

**Actions/Resources:**

1. Call your member of Congress (202- 224-3121) to tell her/him, as a person of faith and a lover of God's Creation, that you believe our country needs to preserve National Natural Treasures and to not destroy the National Butterfly Center in Texas with an unnecessary wall. Go to: <https://www.nationalbutterflycenter.org/about-nbc/maps-directions/9-national-butterfly-center/258-border-wall-information>
2. In order to be in touch with God's Creation this Lent, plan to spend a day in a Nature Center closest to you, thanking God for the beauty that surrounds you.
3. Educate yourself at sites such as: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnZCOzTPsM>, <https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/4/10/14471304/trump-border-wall-animals>, and <https://www.ecowatch.com/butterfly-center-trumps-border-wall-2623393125.html>.

**Prayer:** Join in this prayer for the Earth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJz0ZuxxM10>



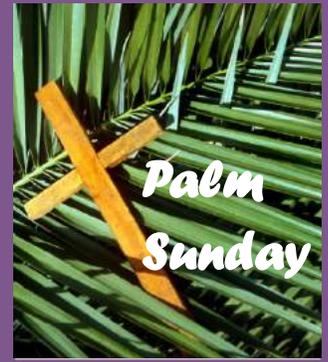
Devotion by Sister Maria Orlandini, Franciscan Action Network

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Turning Walls into Welcome

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### Palm Sunday—Walls Increase Suffering of Indigenous Groups

**Scripture:** “Go to the village ahead of you, and...you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’ They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.” (Luke 19:30-31, 35.)

**Reflection:** Luke is a gospel of constant journeys. By Luke 19, Jesus and the disciples have finally arrived at Bethphage and Bethany, just 1 to 2 miles down a desert road from the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem, which has been their destination since chapter 10. But ahead of their un-invited entrance before an existing government fearful of their caravan’s arrival, Jesus stops to build the scene of a kingdom-claiming in his unique style. Jesus’ kingdom engages partners; enlisting help from disciples to go into the village, and offering a role to unknown villagers to provide the young, powerless, never-ridden animal that would become the transport for a humble and suffering Savior to fulfill prophecy (Zechariah 9:9). The villagers concur with the disciples’ request, and set in motion the final migration of a Lord who both loved the despised, & was soon to become one rejected, too.



**Story:** U.S. ICE committed to expand language services for indigenous persons in a [2015 report](#), recognizing increasing numbers of K’iche’, Mam, Achi, Ixil, Awakatek, Jakalteq and Qanjobal (Mayan dialects spoken in what is currently Guatemala and southern Mexico) individuals in facilities. Among all of Latin America, [at least 560 Indigenous languages are spoken by 780 different](#) tribal and ethnic groups. But instead of improving care for indigenous migrants, three indigenous children/young adults have tragically died in Customs & Border Patrol custody over the past 8 months. They include 7 year old Guatemalan girl Jakelin Caal Maquin, of Maya Q’eqchi’ descent, who died of severe dehydration in CBP custody (see photo at left.) Also, Felipe Gomez Alonzo, an 8-year-old Guatemalan boy of Maya Chuj heritage died of flu on Christmas Eve while in CBP custody in New Mexico. And, Claudia Patricia Gómez González, a 20-year-old student of Maya Mam background, also from Guatemala, was shot in the head and killed last summer by a Border Patrol agent as she was seeking work in the U.S. to pay for her education.

### Action/Resources:

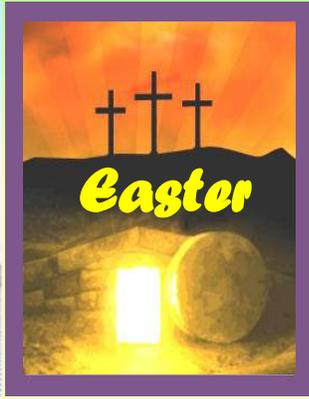
1. Read from a Kiowa tribe author about challenges faced by indigenous Central American migrants: <https://intercontinentalcry.org/indigenous-immigrants-face-unique-challenges-at-the-border/> & learn here about work dilemmas faced: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/indigenous-migrants-face-extra-challenges-finding-work-in-the-us-2018-08-15>.
2. Learn about the need for additional indigenous interpreters: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/19/us-must-provide-interpreters-indigenous-migrants-it-could-save-lives/?utm\\_term=.9b7cdc5a3b61](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/19/us-must-provide-interpreters-indigenous-migrants-it-could-save-lives/?utm_term=.9b7cdc5a3b61). Then, call (202- 224-3121) and visit your legislators to urge additional funds for interpreters to meet this need.
3. Build relationships with indigenous organizations in your area, and offer your support for their priorities. Consider planning a vigil together with them and your faith community that raises awareness of indigenous migrant concerns.
4. Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmtgGriPDrY> of indigenous displacement by international companies which limited land use for rural communities and pushed Jakelin and her father to have to leave Guatemala.

**Prayer:** Colt-riding Christ, chrySTALLize within us a vision of faith that favors humility, engages leadership from communities on the edges, and that seeks justice for indigenous neighbors often suffering displacement, discrimination, & abuse. Amen.



Devotion by Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries

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### **Easter—Our Faith Calls Us to Break Down Walls & Build Unity**

**Scripture:** *“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.” John 20:1*

**Reflection:** In the fullest sense, Easter is a new way of life, in which we are “dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:11). We are called to live into the light and abundance, grace and mercy, and reconciliation and restoration God promised through Jesus’ life. Easter is the celebration of life over death and rejoicing in the restored relationship with God, with each other, and with all creation. We can ask about our text— Why did Peter & the other disciple leave the tomb? Why did Mary Magdalene stay? Why did Jesus choose her to carry the resurrection message? She decided in that moment to sit in her despair, to mourn a man she loved. And as Jesus presents himself to her, Mary becomes the beacon of the good news to tell others.

God breaks through all human-made barriers. God created creation out of dust. God saved God’s people from oppression and slavery. God became human. The walls we construct – physical, social, emotional, and political – are no match for God’s love and mercy. As our country ponders extending the physical wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, we hide behind the rational of national security. However, the wall represents exclusion and isolation. How is it a reflection of our own shortcomings? As people of faith, Easter allows us – urges us – to live in this world differently. God’s redemptive love is found in the resurrection story. We are invited to reconcile our sinful ways that keep us disconnected and apart. As we long for belonging, as we long for welcome, as we long for forgiveness, Jesus’ death and resurrection heal us. We are offered an opportunity to break down the walls that keep us separated and divided. Easter brings us a moment to reflect how we can live more freely, choosing to love and be loved; choosing to welcome and be welcomed; choosing to forgive and be forgiven. As families make miraculous journeys grounded in immense faith, they are choosing life over violence, desperation, and death. May we be courageous enough to break down the walls and to call out our own government’s obsession with walls to be a place that reflects redemptive grace, mercy, and love. God calls us to be better. Humanity calls us to be better. May we show that we can do better.



**Story:** From a cemetery in Brooks County, TX. where remains of unidentified migrants, ‘*los desconocidos*,’ are buried (see image L. from PCUSA), PCUSA’s Vilmarie Cintrón Olivieri reflected on a migrant grandmother she’d met the day before in a Metamoros, MX. encampment—where the woman awaited claiming asylum with her grandchildren: “She told me, ‘What I need is prayer.’ But in my heart, prayers are not enough. Our call is to look for ways to help, to look for the correct information, to talk about the possibilities, to organize.” To do so is to offer new life.

### **Actions/Resources:**

1. Visit the Southern Border Communities Coalition at <https://www.southernborder.org/> to learn more about the border wall and about how border regions are striving to create healthier, holistic communities in the midst of an international border.
2. Watch video at <https://vimeo.com/306815227> hear border reflections by the PCUSA’s Co-Moderator, Vilmarie Cintrón Olivieri.

**Prayer:** “O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Grant us that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever.” *Amen.* (Taken from *Common Book of Worship*, Litany for Easter)



*Devotion by Amanda Craft, PCUSA Office of Immigration Issues*

For questions about this resource, contact Rev. Sharon Stanley-Rea, [sstanley@dhm.disciples.org](mailto:sstanley@dhm.disciples.org). Devotions online at: <http://bit.ly/IICHolyDays>. See our related resource at: <http://bit.ly/IICBorderWallFaithBkgrounder>.