

Ignite the Light



EPIPHANY DEVOTION

Threats to Asylum Seekers thru MPP, Tent Courts, & “Safe Third Country” Agreements


After finding The Light, they “left for their own country by another road.” Matthew 2:12

Reflection: In his 2019 Epiphany homily, Pope Francis reminds us that the Star was the brightest of all stars. Yet, only the Magi saw the great light. After standing directly beneath the star and allowing themselves to be bathed in the light of Jesus, the Magi altered their course. They rejected the darkness of a human King. Their encounter with Jesus led them to the road taken by Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. Like the Magi, they all journeyed to a place unexpected and sacrificed their plans in order to usher forth the Light of God. They saw light that overcame darkness—but had to be open to it. We, too, are called to alter our course of “me, me, me” and “my needs” and take the path illumined by the Magi’s example- that of compassion, justice and concern for all of God’s children.

Story: Alejandra is a 28 year old mother of two who has lived a life of fear and violence in Honduras. She is one of 60,000 asylum seekers who have been placed in the Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as the Remain in Mexico policy. Alejandra prayed for an end to her dark journey and for a compassionate judge who would provide justice to her. She did not know that judges never go to the tent courts. Alejandra was ordered find her way to the international bridge of Nueva Laredo, Mexico, in the dead of night. At 4:30 a.m., she, her kids, and about 50 others, were taken to a tent in Laredo, Texas. Here, at the tent court, they each had a brief encounter with a judge who appeared via video. Like most seekers at the tent courts, Alejandra had no chance to meet with a lawyer. After her brief video hearing, she was sent back to Mexico to wait. The numerous asylum seekers who failed to make it to the bridge by 4:30 a.m. were simply deported in absentia, their claims dismissed. Alejandra had hoped for the Light of Truth. Instead she experienced a scene similar to when Dorothy first meets the Wizard, and was not offered justice.

Actions:

- Write your Congressperson and tell them that MPP violates human rights and represents to the world that USA is not courageous and compassionate, but selfish and greedy. We are better than this. You may send a message [here](#).
- Write a Letter to the Editor explaining the MPP process and how that runs counter to your faith values. Share stats about MPP through [this helpful infographic](#). Image at right also from this source.
- Learn more about damages to migrants caused by “Safe Third Country” Agreements in the articles [here](#) and [here](#).
- Ask a church leader to highlight from the pulpit regarding the dangers of “Safe Third Country” agreements and “Tent Courts.”
- Pray with your family every night for those who are not seated at a table, eating food and sleeping indoors.

TENT COURTS 
In September, tent facilities were set up by the DHS and DOJ in Brownsville and Laredo, Texas with judges videoconferencing into courtrooms to hear asylum cases. The public has not had access to these hearings. The tent courts present a serious due process violation for asylum seekers.

Prayer: Precious Lord, as this Christmas season draws to a close, illumine our vision so we might find your path. The light of justice and truth seems to shine only for a few. Human demagogues want those who are enlightened to return to darkness. Dear Lord, give us the courage to remain in your Light when darkness pulls us away from You. Grant us the wisdom to sacrifice our plans and change course as needed so that your plan for justice will be made manifest. Give us hearts on fire to joyfully usher forth your light of compassion and justice to all the pilgrims who present at our borders. Amen.

By Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, Daughters of Charity

Find all IIC “Holy Days & Holidays” resources online at: <http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/>

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