**Catholic Day of Action with Immigrant Children**
**July 18, 2019**
**Prayer and Ritual**

**Prayer Service Parts**:
Outside Prayer

- Leader
- Reader 1: 5-year-old from Honduras
- Reader 2: 12-year-old from Ecuador
- Reader 3: 12-year-old from Guatemala
- Reader 4: Prayers of Petition
- Reader 5: Gospel of Mark (Mark 10:13-16)
- Closing

Inside Prayer

- Reader 7: Rosary Leader
- Reader 8: First Sorrowful Mystery, 16-year-old mother from El Salvador
- Reader 9: Second Sorrowful Mystery, 15-year-old
- Reader 10: Third Sorrowful Mystery, 16-year-old from Honduras
- Reader 11: Fourth Sorrowful Mystery, 11-year-old from El Salvador
- Reader 12: Fifth Sorrowful Mystery, 15-year-old from El Salvador

## After the Speakers

**Leader:**
Let's take a moment to pray and to remember . . .

***Pause***

We gather today in the presence of the God of infinite love and compassion. It is that God who has called us here today to bear witness to the dignity of every human person and to hold our elected representatives accountable for the atrocities perpetrated on our brothers and sisters—immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers—mothers, fathers, aunts and uncles. We remember especially the children—frightened, alone, hungry, and cold. These are God's children—our

children. We must not—we will not—let this continue. We pray loudly, clearly: Stop the inhumanity—NOW!

We are here today to stand with God's precious children. They cry out and so we must speak.

**Sing:** "Who Will Speak" by Marty Haugen 2X

*Who will speak if we don't?*
*Who will speak if we don't?*
*Who will speak so their voice will be heard?*
*Oh, who will speak if we don't?*

**Leader:**
You may recall that over the past few weeks a group of attorneys interviewed more than 60 children at U.S. Border Patrol facilities in El Paso and the Rio Grande Valley. These are their stories as reported by HuffPost.[i]

Let us listen to the children . . .

**Reader 1:**
A 5-year-old from Honduras who was taken from his father says:

"The immigration agents separated me from my father right away. I was very frightened and scared. I cried. I have not seen my father again.

I have been at this facility for several days. I have not been told how long I have to stay here. I am frightened, scared, and sad.

It is cold at night when we sleep. I have shoes but no socks."

***Pause***

**Sing:**

**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.
**Leader:** Christ, have mercy. **All:** Christ, have mercy.
**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Reader 2:**
A 12-year-old from Ecuador talks about mistreatment by officers.
"The officers took everything from us except our documents. They even took our shoelaces. There was a mother in our group traveling with a very young baby. The officers took her diapers, baby formula, and nearly everything else she had and threw it away.

The water here is horrible. It tastes like chlorine.

The officials here are very bad to us. During the night when we're trying to sleep, they come in and wake us up, yelling and scaring us. The guards who are yelling don't speak much Spanish, so it's hard to understand what they're saying.

Every night my sisters keep asking me, 'When will our mommy come to get us?' I don't know what to tell them. It's very hard for all of us to be here."

***Pause***

**Sing:**

**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.
**Leader:** Christ, have mercy. **All:** Christ, have mercy.
**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Reader 3:**
A 12-year-old from Guatemala tells us of his hunger:
"The guards were mean and scary. They yelled at us. One day the guards wanted to know if anyone had snuck food in the cell. They found one kid who was about 15 or 16 years' old who had a burrito, pudding, and juice. The officials handcuffed his wrists.

I'm so hungry that I've woken up in the middle of the night with hunger. I'm too scared to ask the officials here for any more food, even though there is not enough food here for me.

I saw a child ask for more food once and the guard told him 'No, you've had your ration."

***Pause***

**Sing:**

**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.
**Leader:** Christ, have mercy. **All:** Christ, have mercy.
**Leader:** Lord, have mercy. **All:** Lord, have mercy.

**Reader 4**
A reading from the Gospel of Mark (Mark 10:13-16)
People were bringing children to him that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this he became indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them.

**Sing:** "Who Will Speak"

**Prayers of Petition:**
Let us pray,

We beseech heaven and all who can hear. Give us eyes to see and ears to hear those whose very lives cry out for justice. Break open our hearts and turn our hands and our lives to the service of your people, especially those most in need of your care, Oh God.

Our response to these prayers of petition will be: **Stop the Inhumanity.**

For those forced to flee their countries of origin because of fear, violence, corruption, and poverty, we cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For the president, his staff and Cabinet, for members of Congress and all who are complicit in inflicting suffering and harm on immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees that they repent, end the torture and stop the violence, we cry out**, All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For all who denigrate and scapegoat immigrants and refugees for their own political gain, that they might see the profound harm they have done to the fabric of our nation and seek instead the common good, we cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For the children who have been taken from their families and incarcerated by our government and for those who love them and prayer for their safe return, we cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For the all those living in filthy, inhumane conditions in U.S. detention centers, we cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For those good-hearted people watching the suffering of immigrants and feeling powerless to act, that they might embrace their power and cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

For the all our migrant sisters and brothers who have died needlessly in our rivers and deserts and jails, we remember:

- Oscar Alberto and his daughter Valeria who drowned crossing the Rio Grande;
- Felipe, aged 9 and Jakelin, 8 who died in U.S. custody;
- Jorge Alexander who was murdered in Tijuana as he waited to apply for asylum in the US;
- Six-year-old Gurupreet Kaur who died in a remote desert area of Arizona;
- And for all those whose names we do not know who have died seeking safety for themselves and their children and for those who mourn their loss.

We cry out, **All: Stop the Inhumanity.**

**Closing:**

For months now, the events at the southern border of our country have broken our hearts and stoked our anger and fear for our neighbors and family in the interior has grown.

The conditions our children face at the border is a stark reminder of the moral bankruptcy of our current immigration policy. The fear of deportation—the fear

of separation from their parents that our children live with every day is a reminder of the hardness of our national heart.

And so we pray:

God, stir-up our hearts. Give us courage to rise up and stop this terrible suffering. Give us the strength, as individuals, groups, parishes, and as a society to put an end to these unjust immigration policies.

Give hope to our suffering brothers and sisters, redeem us from our hesitancy to act, and help this country to repent of its violence and brutality. Amen.

And so we cry out to heaven—Stop the inhumanity—NOW!
**All: Stop the inhumanity—NOW!**

**Invitation to Prayer in the Russell Rotunda:**
We will continue our prayer in the Rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building. Marshals are available to point the way. Once inside we will continue our prayer and those who have already indicated, will risk arrest for the sake of our children and families.

## RECONVENE IN THE RUSSELL ROTUNDA

### Prayer in the Rotunda

**Sing** (as folks gather—as many times as possible)

"Who Will Speak" by Marty Haugen (Has many times as necessary)

Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be hear?
Oh, who will speak if we don't?

**Rosary Leader:**
We gather here to pray that ancient Catholic prayer, the rosary. We gather as a believing community here in the sight of our elected leaders. We pray for our members of Congress and especially for President Trump knowing that God can open minds and transform hearts. And we commend all of our immigrant sisters and brothers, especially the children, into the loving hands of our Blessed Mother, Mary.

And so we begin, as is our custom . . .
*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

**Apostles Creed:**
*I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord: Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.*

**Our Father:**
*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

**Hail Mary (3x):**
*Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death Amen*.

**Glory Be**
*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Today we pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the rosary remembering the passion of Jesus and sharing the suffering of immigrant children and families.

**First Mystery Reader:**
The first sorrowful mystery, the agony in the garden.

A 16-year-old mother from El Salvador says:

"Two hours after we crossed, we met Border Patrol and they took us to a very cold house. They took away our baby's diapers, baby formula, and all of our belongings.

After that they took us to a place with a tent. Up until this point, our family was kept together, but here they took our daughter and me out of the cell and separated my fiancé from us. Our [one-year-old] baby was crying. We asked the guards why they were taking our family apart and they yelled at us.

We stayed in a room with 45 other children. There was no mat, so my baby and I slept directly on the cement.

I have been in the U.S. for six days and I have never been offered a shower or been able to brush my teeth. There is no soap here and our clothes are dirty. They have never been washed. My daughter is sick and so am I."

**Rosary Leader:** *Our Father; Hail Mary (10x); Glory Be*

**Second Mystery Reader:**
The second sorrowful mystery, the scourging at the pillar.

A 15-year-old said, "I started taking care of a [little girl] in the Ice Box after they separated her from her father. I did not know either of them before that. She was very upset. The workers did nothing to try to comfort her. I tried to comfort her, and she has been with me ever since.

She sleeps on a mat with me on the concrete floor. We spend all day every day in that room. There are no activities, only crying. We eat in the same area. We can only go outside to go to the bathroom. There is nothing to do. None of the adults take care of us so we try to take care of each other."

**Rosary Leader:** *Our Father; Hail Mary (10x); Glory Be*

**Third Mystery Reader:**
The third sorrowful mystery, the crowning with thorns

A 16-year-old mother from Honduras only wanted a blanket for her baby.
"We were put into a three-sided cage with the fourth side open to the outside filled with loads of people. We had to wait for someone to stand up and quickly take their place on the ground.

My [8-month-old] baby was naked outside with no blanket for all four days we were there. We were freezing. My baby couldn't sleep because the ground was cement with rocks and every time, she moved the sharp ground would scratch her. There were many pregnant women who had to sleep on rocks, and I felt very badly for them.

My baby began vomiting and having diarrhea. I asked to see a doctor and they did not take us. I asked again the next day and the guard said 'She doesn't have the face of a sick baby. She doesn't need to see a doctor.'

Since we arrived here my baby has lost a lot of weight. She cries a lot and is listless."

**Rosary Leader:** *Our Father; Hail Mary (10x); Glory Be*

**Fourth Mystery Reader:**
The fourth sorrowful mystery the carrying of the cross

An 11-year-old from El Salvador said, we cry a lot . . .
"We are being held in a cold cell. We sleep on the floor on mats with blankets. I have only been permitted to take a shower twice in the almost two weeks we've been here. We've been allowed to brush our teeth once.

About three days ago I got a fever. They moved me alone to a flu cell. There is no one to take care of you there. They just give you pills twice a day.

They let us out of our cell twice a day for a few minutes but other than that we just sit there. We cry a lot and the other kids in the cell also cry. It's so ugly to be locked up all the time."

**Rosary Leader:** *Our Father; Hail Mary (10x); Glory Be*

**Fifth Mystery Reader:**
The fifth sorrowful mystery, the crucifixion.

**A 15-year-old from El Salvador** volunteered to care for another child
"A Border Patrol agent came in our room with a two-year-old boy and asked us, 'Who wants to take care of this little boy?' Another girl said she would take care of him, but she lost interest after a few hours, so I started taking care of him yesterday. His bracelet says he is two years old.

I feed the 2-year-old boy, change his diaper, and play with him. He is sick. He has a cough and a runny nose and scabs on his lips. He was coughing last night so I asked to take him to see the doctor and they told me that the doctor would come to our room, but the doctor never came. The little boy that I am taking care of never speaks. He likes for me to hold him as much as possible.

**Rosary Leader:** Our Father; Hail Mary (10x); Glory Be
*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen*.

Special thanks to Anne-Louise Nadeau, SNDdeN, Pax Christi USA and Ann Scholz, SSND, LCWR for planning the prayer.

# Songs for Catholic Day of Action with Immigrant Children

**Who Will Speak, Marty Haugen**

Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak if we don't?
Who will speak so their voice will be hear?
Oh, who will speak if we don't?

**This is Holy Ground, Christopher Beatty**

This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground
For our God is present
And where God is, is holy
This is holy ground
We're standing on holy ground
For God is present
And where God is, is holy

**Amazing Grace**

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
T'was blind but now I see

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

Through many dangers, toils and snares
We have already come.
T'was grace that brought us safe thus far
And grace will lead us home,
And grace will lead us home

Amazing grace, How Sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found
T'was blind but now I see
Was blind, but now I see.

**They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love, Peter Scholtes**

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

[i] HuffPost, REAL LIFE. REAL NEWS. REAL VOICES. Updated Jun 28, 2019. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/migrant-children-describe-detention_n_5d1646ffe4b03d61163af666