Prayer for Children Who Have Been Taken into U.S. Border Custody

Leader:

Guided by our faith and our national values, we affirm the dignity of all people and our call to love our neighbors.

Reader 1

Every person, every family deserves stability and security. Be with families torn asunder by violence and poverty.

All: **Compassionate and Merciful God, hear our prayer**

Catholic social tradition teaches us that every person deserves equality and respect. May we hear the call to love our neighbor and care for people most at risk, especially children.

All: **Compassionate and Merciful God, hear our prayer**

We call on this Administration to immediately end the unjust and immoral practice of jailing children and separating families.

All: **Compassionate and Merciful God, hear our prayer**

We cannot let this Administration chip away at fundamental values and continue to only engender fear and chaos among immigrants and their families. May all of us present here at this witness hold our government to a higher moral and ethical standard.

All: **Compassionate and Merciful God, hear our prayer**

Leader:
Seven migrant children are known to have died after being taken into U.S. immigration custody. With these names we will respond with **"Presente"** (*A word used in Latin America for those who have died in the struggle for justice.)*

Reader 2:

For unaccompanied minors such as 16-year-old **Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez** from Guatemala who was seeking refuge with relatives in the US. We proclaim: **PRESENTE**

For those children like 2 ½-year-old **Wilmer Josué Ramírez Vásquez**, whose parents' only "crime" was seeking asylum from Guatemalan violence. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

For those teenagers who needed to leave their home country to find a better life in the US and help their family, as 16-year-old **Juan de León Gutiérrez** from Guatemala who died in El Paso needing medical care. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

For 7-year-old **Jakelin Caal Maquin** from Guatemala, who could have lived a healthy life if she had had treatment of bacterial infections earlier in her journey. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

For 8-year-old **Felipe Alonzo-Gomez** from Guatemala who had hopes for living the American Dream before he contracted a cough, nausea and fever. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

So many children are looking for family and parents in the US. 10-year-old, **Darlyn Cristabel Cordova Valle** from El Salvador, looked forward to being reunited with her mother, yet heart illness made reunification unattainable. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

Another 20-month-old girl, **Mariee Juárez** from Guatemala, died shortly after being held with her mother at a family detention center in Texas. We Proclaim: **PRESENTE**

Reader 3:

As we come together today, may we bring into this circle of love people who are concerned for and committed to all our sisters and brothers fleeing persecution all over the world, especially those on our southern border.

All: Keep us united in Love.

We ask God for forgiveness for any way in which we are complicit in this system. God offers us a change of heart, courage and strength to pursue justice and care for every dear neighbor without exception from whom we do not separate ourselves.

All: Keep us united in Love.

Leader:

We join with thousands of persons all over our nation who gather to express our distress and outrage at the way these dear neighbors are being treated by agents of our own government. We pray for those who make policies that abuse refugees and migrants and for those who implement those practices. We are one.

Let us accept these graces and encourage one another in the name of God who loves us all.