

The DREAM Act Presented in Different Faiths



Lectionary Texts for Protestant and Catholic Texts and Summary

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2011

Reading I: Exodus 16:2-15 or Jonah 3:10 – 4:11

Summary

**Exodus*: God listens when the Israelites complain against Him, and gives them food in a miracle in the middle of the desert.

**Jonah*: God's mercy is not just for Israelites alone. Jonah hated the Ninevites, simply for being from a country he despised, but God's mercy is not limited by tribal rivalries or human conflict. Jonah responds to God's compassion toward his (Jonah's) enemies by pouting, and God scolds Jonah for his failure to understand and give thanks for the wideness of God's mercy.

-Roman Catholic: **Isaiah 55:6-9**

-United Methodist & ELCIC: **Exodus 16:2-15**

Reading II: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 or Psalm 145:1-8

Summary

*"O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples." (Psalm 105:1)

*"The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made." (Psalm 145:8-9)

-Roman Catholic: **Psalm 145:2-18**

-United Methodist: **Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 or Psalm 78**

Reading III: Philippians 1:21-30

Summary

* "Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and are in no way intimidated by your opponents." (vv 27-28a)

-Roman Catholic: **Philippians 1:20-24, 27**

Gospel Reading: Matthew 20:1-16

**The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard*. "Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last."

DREAM Sabbath Themes

*The stories we hear in Exodus, Jonah, and the Gospel reading for this day all point to a kind of justice that ranges far outside our understandings of retributive justice. God's justice does not merely consist of deserved compensation—either “deserved” punishment or reward—but is shaped by mercy and generosity, and is not limited by human tribal or national boundaries. Our sense of fairness and justice, in turn, should not be colored by envy or feelings of entitlement, but will be shaped by mercy and generosity, if it is of God.

*”The last shall be first and the first shall be last” (Matthew 20:16). The alienated immigrant, the hungry stranger, the parentless child – all these are considered “last” to the world and “first” to Christ. We should treat them according to these truths.

*In light of these readings, what kind of justice do you think God desires for DREAM students and their families?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2011

Reading I: Exodus 17:1-7 or Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

**Exodus*: The Israelites complained and tested God by grumbling against God's prophet, Moses. God then had Moses strike a rock, and water came from it.

**Ezekiel*: “Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God. Turn, then, and live.” (Ezekiel 18:31-32)

-Roman Catholic: **Ezekiel 18:25-28**

-United Methodist & ELCIC: **Exodus 17:1-7**

Reading II: Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 or Psalm 25:1-9

Summary

**Psalm 78*: “Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth... We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.” (vv1, 4)

**Psalm 25*:

“Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way. He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way. All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.” (vv. 8-10)

-Roman Catholic: **Psalm 25:9-14**

-United Methodist & ELCIC: **Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16**

Reading III: Philippians 2:1-13

Summary

*“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus...” (vv. 3-5)

-Roman Catholic: **Philippians 2:1-11 or Philippians 2:1-5**

Gospel Reading: Matthew 21:23-32

Summary

*“[Jesus said to them,] ‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’” (vv. 28-31a)

*Jesus commends tax collectors and prostitutes, those viewed as mere sinners and criminals, as those who are most able to understand and accept God’s mercy.

-Roman Catholic: **Matthew 21:28-32**

DREAM Sabbath Themes

*The reading from Philippians reminds us what is central to Christian faith and life: to think and act in the mind of Christ, looking not to our own interests, but to the interests of others. How might we hear the stories of immigrants in our country differently if we listened “in the mind of Christ”? How can our questions and conversations about immigration policy reflect the mind of Christ?

*Throughout Scripture we hear stories of God’s particular care for those who are deemed unworthy, unclean, or transgressors by their own communities or broader society. DREAM students are often told they are transgressors who do not belong in the U.S., and they sometimes feel they do not belong *anywhere*. The Gospel reading for this day suggests that those on the margins of society, those who “do not belong”, may understand and know God’s grace better than others. What do we learn of God’s grace from the stories of DREAMers?

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2011

Reading I: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 or Isaiah 5:1-7

Summary

**Exodus*: The Ten Commandments are given to the Israelites so that they would know how to live while they wandered throughout the world.

**Isaiah: The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard*. “For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!” (v. 7)

-Roman Catholic: **Isaiah 5:1-7**

-United Methodist & ELCIC: **Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20**

Reading II: Psalm 19 or Psalm 80:7-15

Summary

**Psalm 19*: “...The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” (vv. 8-9)

**Psalm 80*: “Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.” (v. 7)

-Roman Catholic: **Psalm 80:9-20**

-United Methodist & ELCIC: **Psalm 19**

Reading III: Philippians 3:4b-14

Summary

*“Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith.” (vv. 7-9)

*Paul reminds the church at Philippi that righteousness comes to us not by anything we do, but by God’s grace.

-Roman Catholic: **Philippians 4:6-9** (for notes on this text, see October 9 Summary for Reading III and DREAM Sabbath reflections, below)

Gospel Reading: **Matthew 21:33-46**

Summary

*God’s beloved vineyard is exploited by the tenants who have leased it, who kill God’s son in order to claim some right to the vineyard.

*“Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?”’” (v. 42)

-Roman Catholic: **Matthew 21:33-43**

DREAM Sabbath Themes

*We are not our own. We are, like the vine of the Hebrew people, planted and cared for in a new and strange land. We are all strangers on this earth, and all belong to God alone

*The readings for today present a tension present throughout Scripture: Paul is clear that his righteousness (and ours) comes not from adherence to any law, but as a gift from God through faith in Christ. But the readings from Exodus, Isaiah, the Psalms and Matthew remind us that God “expects justice”—that our actions *do matter*. How might we hear the stories of immigrants in our country differently if we hold to both of these points?

*God gave the Commandments to the Hebrew people to shape and order their lives in the desert. They were commanded first to have no other gods before God; they owed their first loyalty to God and God’s law above all others. Every law that comes after these commandments is secondary.

*Some view the problem of illegal immigration as a simple problem of individuals choosing not to obey the law. But if we accept, as our faith teaches us, that there are laws to which we owe higher loyalty, how might that change our understanding of the varied decisions people make about migrating? What about children or youth who honor their father and mother by accepting their decision to migrate?

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2011

Reading I: **Exodus 32:1-14** or **Isaiah 25:1-9**

Summary

**Exodus*: “The Lord said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.’ But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, ‘O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?’...And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.” (vv. 9-11, 14)

**Isaiah:*

O Lord, you are my God;

I will exalt you...

For you have been a refuge to the poor,

a refuge to the needy in their distress,

a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat....

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,

of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain

the shroud that is cast over all peoples,

the sheet that is spread over all nations;

he will swallow up death for ever.

(vv. 1, 4, 6-8a)

-Roman Catholic reading: **Isaiah 25:6-10**

-United Methodist & ELCIC reading: **Exodus 32:1-14**

Reading II: Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23 or Psalm 23

Summary

*Psalm 106: Praise for God's mercy and goodness, and a confession of sins: "Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly." (v. 6)

*Psalm 23: "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." (vv 4-5)

-Roman Catholic reading: Psalm 23:1-6

-United Methodist & ELCIC reading: Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23, Psalm 19 or Psalm 80:7-15

Reading III: Philippians 4:1-9

Summary

*"Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." (v. 8)

*"I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. I can do all things through [God] who strengthens me." (vv 12-13)

-Roman Catholic reading: **Philippians 4:12-20**

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

Summary

**The Parable of the Wedding Banquet.*

-Roman Catholic reading: **Matthew 22:1-14** or **Matthew 22:1-10**

DREAM Sabbath Themes

* DREAM students live with the understanding that they could be deported away from their families and their homes on any given day. They have every reason to live in fear, withdrawing from their community and the world, and yet they have proven themselves to be people of profound faith, modeling for us what it means to trust God even in the midst of those who want to do harm. They model for us what it is to live with confidence like Paul's that God is sovereign, and in the spirit of assurance of Psalm 23. How can the leadership in faith of DREAMers instruct us in our lives and faith journeys? How can we live with faith in the midst of uncertainty and danger, trusting in God's goodness and power?

Jewish mini-service for Justice and Peace

God created us in His own image; in the image of God He created us; male and female He created us.

Our tradition says that God created us through one human being to teach us that whoever destroys a single human soul has destroyed an entire world.

And whoever sustains a single human soul has sustained an entire world.

And a single human being was created for the sake of peace, that none might say: my lineage is greater than yours.

I call heaven and earth to witness: Gentile or Jew, man or woman, manservant or maidservant -- all according to our deeds does the spirit of God rest upon us.

Speak to the whole community of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy."

As God is merciful and gracious, so shall you be merciful and gracious.

When we oppress the poor, we offend their maker.

But we honor their maker when we are kind to the needy.

Let your neighbor's property be as dear to you as your own.

And let your neighbor's honor be as dear to you as your own.

You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling-block before the blind.

You shall not rejoice when your enemy falls.

You shall not exult when your enemy stumbles.

Never say: I will do to them as they have done to me; I will repay them according to their deeds.

You shall not hate another in your heart; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

O God, You have called us to peace, for You are Peace itself. May we have the vision to see that each of us, in some measure, can help to realize these aims;
Where there are ignorance and superstition,

Let there be enlightenment and knowledge.

Where there are prejudice and hatred,
Let there be acceptance and love.

Where there are fear and suspicion,
Let there be confidence and trust.

Where there are tyranny and oppression,
Let there be freedom and justice.

Where there are poverty and disease,
Let there be prosperity and health.

Where there are strife and discord,
Let there be harmony and peace.

Our God and Creator, we thank You for the sense of justice You have implanted within us, and which always seeks, though at times haltingly, to express itself in daily life.

Make us, O God, more steadfast in our desire to do Your will. Teach us that the men and women around us are brothers and sisters, and fill us with such love for our fellow creatures that we will never wrong them, or exploit them, or take advantage of their weakness or ignorance.

Kindle in us a passion for righteousness. Grant us the vision to see that only justice can endure, and that only in being just to one another can we make our lives acceptable to You.

May we by our thoughts and our deeds hasten the time when wrong and violence shall cease, and justice be established in all the earth.

Let Justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like a mighty stream.

וַיִּגַּל כְּמִים מְשֻׁפָּט,
וַצְדִּיקָה כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן.

Hinei Ma Tov

Henei ma tov umanaim Shevet
achim gam yachad Sinei ma tov
umanaim Shevet achim gam
yachad

Behold how good and
How pleasant it is
For brothers to dwell together
Behold how good and
How pleasant it is
For brothers to dwell together

Mi Shebeirach

~Debbie Friedman

Mi shebeirach avoteinu M'kor
hab'racha l'imoteinu May the
source of strength,
Who blessed the ones before us,
Help us find the courage to make our lives a blessing, and
let us say, Amen.

Mi shebeirach imoteinu
M'kor habrachah l'avoteinu

Bless those in need of healing with r'fuah sh'leimah, The
renewal of body, the renewal of spirit,
And let us say, Amen

The DREAM Act and Islamic Values

The DREAM Act and Islamic Social Justice

Our nation was founded on a set of principles that seeks to uphold justice, liberty and dignity of the human being. Our laws are meant to embody those principles. In working “toward a more perfect union” there are times and cases where laws and the legal system fall short of these fundamental principles. Sadly these shortcomings are nowhere more apparent than in our nation’s current immigration system.

While the issue of immigration reform may not always be thought of as directly connected to Islamic teachings, surprisingly it has a strong link to Islamic values. At its most basic level immigration reform crosses paths with Islam’s strong sense of justice.

In the Qur’an, Islam’s holy book, God calls upon believers to stand firm in support of justice in Chapter 4, Verse 35:

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to God, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for God can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest ye swerve, and if ye distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that ye do."

He repeats this theme later in Chapter 5, Verse 8:

O you who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for God in equity...Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty.

However justice is not the only Islamic value that comes into play when it comes to immigration reform and especially the DREAM Act.

Individual Responsibility and Accountability

One of the issues that set the DREAM Act apart from most others is that it focuses almost exclusively on undocumented youth. Many, if not most of the youth eligible under the DREAM Act were brought here as children and had no say in the decision of the parents to arrive undocumented or overstay their visas.

Punishing these children who, for all intents and purposes are Americans, because of the decisions of their parents, runs contrary to Islamic values. The Qur’an is absolutely explicitly clear about individual responsibility and accountability.

In chapter 35, verse 18, it states:

And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another. And if a heavily laden soul calls [another] to [carry some of] its load, nothing of it will be carried, even if he should be a close relative.

The Qur'an reiterates this point earlier in chapter 2, verse 286:

On no soul does God place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns, and it suffers every ill that it earns.

The fact that talented youth who grew up in this country as Americans, but are being punished with possible deportation because of the decisions of their parents runs completely contrary to this bedrock Qur'anic principle.

Dignity of the Human Being

Far too often, in heated debates about public policy issues, including immigration reform, there is a tendency to forget about the people such policies affect. Worse is when individuals are dehumanized, given derogatory labels and treated poorly. The Qur'an makes it clear that this is unacceptable.

Each human being is seen as a vicegerent of God, as stated in chapter 2, verse 30 of the Qur'an: *Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth."*

As God's vicegerents, human beings are endowed by the Creator with an inherent dignity that cannot be violated (17:70):

NOW, INDEED, We have conferred dignity on the children of Adam, and borne them over land and sea, and provided for them sustenance out of the good things of life, and favored them far above most of Our creation.

As Islamic values show, people are entitled to be treated with dignity regardless of their legal status.

Compassion and Hospitality

Having an open door and an open heart for those in need is also a fundamental Islamic value. This is especially applicable in an immigration justice context like the DREAM Act.

In early Islamic history, we can see how the values of compassion and hospitality were applied between the local Muslim communities in the city of Medina (the "Ansar"), those who were emigrating from the city of Mecca (muhajireen). The muhajireen were tired and made the trek to Medina under harsh desert conditions. However upon their arrival, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told each Ansar to pair himself or herself up with an emigrant and take care of them in order to establish bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood.

Once the Ansar were able to establish themselves, the Prophet ensured the emigrant muhajireen have opportunities to work and contribute to the general welfare of their society. According to a narrated saying of the Prophet:

The Ansar said to the Prophet, "Divide our date-palms between us and our emigrant brothers." The Prophet said, "No." The Ansar said to the emigrants, "You may do the labor (in our gardens) and we will share the fruits with you." The emigrants said, "We hear and obey." (Citing Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 3, Book 50, No. 880)