



*Scriptural reflections, linked as devotions with the suffering steps of refugees & immigrants.*

**Scripture:** *“When the Egyptians maltreated and oppressed us, imposing hard labor upon us, we cried to the Lord...and God heard our cry, and saw...our oppression. He brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand and outstretched arm...and bringing us into this country, he gave us this land flowing with milk and honey.” Dt. 26:6-9*



**Reflection:** The infinite love and tender mercy of the Creator is revealed in the history of the covenant between God and God’s people. When we find ourselves in alien lands our God is with us. When we are mistreated and oppressed, by those in power, our God upholds us. When our labor is stolen, our fathers detained, and mothers deported our God does not forget us.

We know that our God hears the cries of our immigrant brothers and sisters. We know that our God sees the affliction of those who suffer under the weight of our broken immigration system. We know that the love of our God reaches across barriers and borders to embrace families torn apart by unreasonable immigration policies and practices. We trust that our God will lead each of us beyond the limitations of fear and prejudice, to welcome the stranger, shelter the refugee, and make all families whole again.

**Story:** Evelyn is just one of thousands whose families have been torn apart by our broken immigration system. When she was 3 years old, her parents brought her to the United States from Colombia and overstayed their tourist visa. They hoped to provide a better life for their children. They came in search of the American Dream, a life free from violence and drugs and a chance for Evelyn and her sisters to receive a good education. When Evelyn was a senior in high school, her mother was stopped for driving without a license. Detained for months, she eventually was deported, leaving behind a husband and three daughters, one a U.S. citizen. Evelyn’s father was left to raise his daughters alone, and the loss of their mother’s income put a strain on family finances. The girls missed their mother every day, and Evelyn’s mom missed countless family celebrations — graduations, birthdays, and holidays, as well as the wedding of Evelyn’s sister. After six years of separation, Evelyn was able to see and touch her mother thanks to the efforts of immigrant youth-led *United We Dream*. Evelyn and her mother each traveled to the border towns of Nogales. Evelyn stood on one side of the border, and her mother stood on the other side. They talked and held each other through the fence (see picture above), and Evelyn described the reunion: “After being separated from my mother—the woman who made me the woman I am today, who taught me about courage and love—I was able to see her through an orange-red rusted fence. I remember being excited for weeks to see my Mom again finally! That excitement vanished as soon as I saw her on the other side of the border. Every feeling one could ever experience hit me at once. To be able to touch her soft skin and feel her strong hug in those moments turned my anger, frustration and hurt into action; to keep fighting for her and for countless others who long for their mother’s hug.

**Action/Resources:** Immigration is expected to be a major theme of **Pope Francis’s February 12-17 trip to Mexico**. He will visit Chiapas, on Mexico’s southern border with Guatemala, and Juarez, on Mexico’s northern border with the U.S. His presence will highlight injustices facing those who migrate throughout Central and North America. The Pope’s historic visit to the U.S.-Mexico border is scheduled for Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> and will include a celebration of the Mass. The Ignatian Solidarity Network and its partner networks invite you to participate in [Pope Francis’s visit to the US-Mexico border](#). They are inviting people to engage in a few different ways: 1) [Send a message to Congress](#). Sign a letter to members of Congress calling for humane migration policies in Mexico and Central America and work toward immigration reform grounded in human dignity here in the U.S. 2) Join in [prayer with Pope Francis](#) by hosting prayer vigils in solidarity the Pope’s prayer on the border on February 17. 3) [Join with Pope Francis via livestream](#) for the Mass on the Border, February 17 at 6:00 pm ET; 5:00 pm CT, 4:00 pm MT, 3:00 pm PT. Additional resources area available on their [#Pope2Border](#) page. Check back often for updates.

**Prayer:** Blessed are You, Lord Jesus Christ. You crossed every border between Divinity and humanity to make your home with us. Help us to welcome you in newcomers, migrants, and refugees. Blessed are You, God of all nations. You bless our land richly with goods of creation and with people made in your image. Help us to be good stewards and peacemakers. Help us to live together as your beloved family. Amen!



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