

**Toolkit for Pope Francis' Visit to the United States:
Prayer, Reflection and Action on Immigrants' Rights
September 23- 27th**

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Immigration Context

We are preparing for a historical moment; Pope Francis will be the first Pope to ever address a joint session of the U.S. Congress. It is important to place this momentous event in the larger context of the legislative body he will speak to.

Pope Francis will be focusing on four main issue areas including:

- Income inequality
- Family unity,
- Climate justice
- Immigration.

Although these topics are in many ways intertwined, the focus of this toolkit will be on immigration and family unity. Right now, the tenure of the 2016 Presidential Race is distinctively anti-immigrant. Multiple candidates are speaking disparagingly about immigrants and calling for dangerous and extreme policy changes, including the idea of ending birthright citizenship and thus creating a crisis of child statelessness in the United States.

In the last several months, legislation has been introduced in response to the tragic shooting in San Francisco, which resulted in the death of Kathryn Steinle. We mourn this senseless act of violence with the Steinle family and the rest of the nation, at the same time ask that our nation's leaders not use the actions of one individual to place blame on entire communities. Anti-immigrant legislation has already passed the House of Representatives, which would force local law enforcement officers to act as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, breaking their hard-won trust with immigrant communities. If such legislation passes the Senate, it would reverse years of intentional, community-based policing efforts that are vital to public safety in neighborhoods across the country.

Legislation being considered in the Senate would have negative consequences for millions of our community members. Some members of Congress want to further criminalize those who re-enter the country after they are deported or denied entry by setting a mandatory minimum prison sentence of five years. Estimated conservatively, this would cost taxpayers nearly [\\$2 billion annually](#) and would ultimately increase the federal prison population by approximately 65,000 prisoners from its current level of 208,000, necessitating more than 20 new prisons or prison overcrowding at [167% capacity](#). Other bills would mandate that local police collaborate with ICE in the case of individuals who have committed felonies, without recognizing that many offenses considered misdemeanors for U.S. citizens are categorized as "aggravated felonies" for immigrants.

The Pope's influence on the issues of immigration and family unity comes at an extremely important time. During his visit, Congress will be deciding whether to move forward with anti-immigrant legislation. Using Pope Francis' visit to the United States as an organizing tool, we must work together to stop any negative, anti-immigrant legislation, push back against the anti-immigrant messaging being stoked during the election, and draw on the moral high ground we find in our faith and scriptures.

Please see [Interfaith Immigration Coalition Statements and resources on recent anti-immigrant legislation](#).

If you are a faith leader, please add your name to this [sign on letter](#), demanding that Congress oppose legislation that would force local police to serve as immigration enforcement officers.

The Pope's visit also comes at a time when 60 million people are displaced globally, the highest numbers since World War II. This includes more than 10 million Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons. And yet, the United States has only resettled 1,114 Syrian refugees since the beginning of the conflict. All nations need to stretch out their arms and welcome these refugees. The U.S. should commit to resettling at least 65,000 Syrian refugees over the next two years and streamline processing in order to save refugees' lives. Such leadership by the U.S., along with Germany's recent announcement that it will allow Syrians to apply for asylum, will encourage other countries to follow suit and thus lives to be saved. Sign [this petition](#) to demand the U.S. increase the resettlement of more Syrian refugees!

Papal Position on Immigration

Pope Francis has been very outspoken leader, emphasizing the need to welcome immigrants and refugees in our communities. Although he is not likely to suggest any specific legislation when speaking to the U.S. Congress, he will almost certainly appeal to the moral framework that so many faiths hold, of treating all immigrants and refugees with dignity, love, and respect. We encourage you to use these quotes from Pope Francis in your bulletins, services, resource guides, and other materials around his visit to the United States.

Quotes from the Pope on Immigration

October 12, 2012

“Migrants and refugees can experience, along with difficulties, new, welcoming relationships which enable them to enrich their new countries with their professional skills, their social and cultural heritage, and not infrequently, their witness of faith, which can bring a new energy and life to communities of ancient and Christian tradition, and invite others to encounter Christ and to come to know the Church.”

September 3, 2014

“It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions for migrants more humane.”

“Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a worldwide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress.”

See More Quotes

CLINIC [Pope Quotes on Immigration](#)

[Ignatian Solidarity Network Unaccompanied Children Toolkit Quotes from the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops on Immigration](#)

24-Hour Prayer Reflection Action September 23-24

Beginning September 23rd, immigrants' rights coalitions and faith leaders from throughout the United States will be hosting 24-hour vigils of prayer, reflection, and action to prepare for Pope Francis' address to Congress at 9:20 AM EDT, 6:20 AM PDT.

Most vigils will run from 12 PM EDT on September 23rd through 12 PM EDT, on September 24th. See the steps below for instructions on how you and your local community can organize a vigil.

- 1) Get in touch with your local immigrants' rights group and local interfaith/ecumenical coalitions to see what is being planned for the Pope's visit. See how this 24-hour Vigil for Prayer, Reflection and Action can be integrated into existing plans or built as a stand-alone event.
- 2) Find the right space to hold the vigil. The best places are in a central space that is either symbolic or very public. Consider contacting local congregations in the area who may be able to help with resources, restrooms, and providing a place to watch the Pope's address to Congress on the morning on September 24th. If you are reserving a public space, make sure to apply for and receive the necessary permits ahead of time.
- 3) Start a [sign up sheet](#) and invite volunteers to sign up to take 2-4 hour shifts at the vigil. Develop different activities for each shift that include prayers, songs, guided discussion on immigration, scripture, and more. Send the flier and sign up sheet around the community to get as many people involved as possible!
- 4) Wear white bandanas as a symbol. Last year, Jersey Vargas, a 10 year old girl from California, traveled to Rome to ask the Pope for help in stopping her father's deportation. The gift she brought for him was a Panuelo embroidered by her mother with the image of two doves and a broken nest, to symbolize her broken family. See original story [here](#).
- 5) Prepare your media plan ahead of time and make sure the local coalitions involved are sending out a media advisory. Ensure that at least one local faith leader can speak at the press conference. Try to get an op-ed published from a faith leader on the Pope's message around immigration. Ensure that your supporters are ready to post on social media – live tweeting and creating Facebook posts from the vigil and during the Pope's address to Congress (see resources for media on page 10).
- 6) Find ways to further engage participants in advocacy efforts by writing letters to Congress, calling Representatives/Senators in your state and quoting the Pope on the importance of treating immigrants with dignity and equality. Enlist volunteers to do [voter registration](#) with vigil participants who are eligible to vote – this is a great way to make sure every voice is heard!

Quote the Pope Call-In Day for Immigrants' Rights September 23-24th

Use the script below and call your Representative and Senator to tell them how the Pope's message on family unity and immigrants' rights has inspired you. Go ahead and remind them of some quotes from the Pope on immigration.

Before you call Congress:

- Find your member of Congress. Visit www.senate.gov to find your Senators and www.house.gov to find your Representative.
- Staff working at your Member's office may want to verify that you are a constituent, so have your mailing address or zip code ready.
- Know what you want to say. Consider using and modifying our brief script below.
- Be yourself! Your Members of Congress are there to serve you and want to hear from you, so let them know your concerns.

Calling Congress:

- You can dial 1-866-940-2439, call the Congressional Switchboard at 202-224-3121, or call their office directly at the number found on their website.
- Once you are ready, you can use the sample script below to guide your phone call. Remember to be yourself! Tell your story and share your concerns -- it will help you sound like yourself and less rehearsed.

Sample Script:

Hello, my name is [name] and I'm calling from [name of town]. May I please speak to the staffer who handles immigration issues for the Senator/Representative?

Receptionist: Sure, his/her name is [staffer's name]. I'll connect you. (Write down the name.)

I'm calling from [name of town/congregation] because I know the Pope is sending a strong moral message to Congress that we are to treat all immigrants with solidarity and dignity. I would like to strongly urge the Senator/Representative to vote against anti-immigrant legislation introduced in Congress, specifically:

- [S.1814](#), Stop Sanctuary Cities Act
- [S.1762](#), The Establishing Mandatory Minimums for Illegal Reentry Act
- [S.1812](#), The Improving Cooperation with States and Local Governments & Preventing the Catch and Release of Criminal Aliens Act

When will you be able to speak with your boss about this? When can I follow up with you? (Note response and make plans to follow up.) Thank you for your time!

If they do not answer the phone, you can leave a similar message, including your contact information so they can return your call. Sometimes the receptionist may ask you why you are calling or offer to take a message, and you can use this script for that purpose as well.

Talking Points

- When we think about immigration policy, we should apply the Golden Rule – do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Many of us are told a similar, shared history as the children and grandchildren of immigrants who came to the United States, seeking a better life for themselves and their families. The same desire and dreams are what drive many immigrants today.
- We are all part of the same human family regardless of racial, political, cultural, religious, and economic backgrounds. We need a bigger, more open definition of community because we need one another. As a community, we must create immigration policies that keep families together instead of tearing them apart.
- We are all children of God, and we can do better than perpetuating economic inequality that strains families through low wages, long hours, and discrimination.
- There is so much inequality and injustice that our economic and political system is out of balance. As a community, we must act now to eliminate that imbalance so that fairness and dignity are promoted for everyone, regardless of their immigration status, socioeconomic background, religion, or cultural background.
- At 72%, the majority of Americans believe that undocumented people should have a path to stay legally in the United States. ([What Americans Want to do About Immigration](#)- PEW Research)
- In this coming election cycle, we encourage people to go out and vote their consciences on immigration.

Sample Media Advisory 24-Hour Vigil

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
DATE

Contact:
NAME, PHONE, EMAIL

Faith Leaders Organize Immigration Vigil Around Pope's Visit

Local faith leaders join national movement in support of immigrant's rights and immigration reform planned around Pope Francis's visit to the United States.

CITY, STATE ABBREVIATION – In solidarity with faith communities across the United States, YOUR ORGANIZATION has organized a 24-hour vigil at LOCATION on DATE AND TIME to mark Pope Francis's visit to the United States. The national movement, organized in support of immigrant's rights and immigration reform, will rally around Pope Francis's support for all people to be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion – something organizers hope to hear during his address to the United States Congress.

WHEN: DATE

WHERE: LOCATION

WHAT: YOUR ORGANIZATION NAME will host a 24-hour vigil in support of immigrant's rights and immigration reform, organized around Pope Francis's visit to the United States and address to Congress. Participants will peacefully partake in songs, prayers, discussion around immigrant's rights, and other demonstrations over a 24-hour period at LOCATION before watching the Pope's address to Congress at LOCATION, from TIME.

SPEAKERS: List of speakers at your event. Be sure to include those who are willing to speak to members of the media

VISUALS: List visuals the media might find interesting. Consider including: Signs in support of immigration reform, clergy members, religious symbols, people of faith congregations, immigrant's rights activists.

CO-SPONSORS: List your organization or congregation and any other organizations participating.

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Sample Press Release

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

**For Immediate Release
DATE**

**Contact:
NAME, PHONE, EMAIL**

DOZENS/HUNDREDS/THOUSANDS Gather in CITY for Immigration Vigil Around Pope’s Visit

Over NUMBER faith leaders and activists gathered for a vigil in CITY in support of immigrant’s rights and immigration reform planned around Pope Francis’s visit to the United States.

CITY, STATE ABBREVIATION – Joining a nationwide movement planned around Pope Francis’s visit to the United States in support of immigrant’s rights and immigration reform, over NUMBER of local faith leaders and activists gathered for a 24-hour vigil on DATE (or earlier today) at LOCATION.

Leading discussions on issues facing immigrants and communities, prayers, songs, and other activities, organizers used the vigil as a time to bring attention to Pope Francis’s message of treating immigrants with dignity and compassion. NAME of CONGREGATION, a lead organizer of the vigil, stated, “QUOTE.”

Beginning on September 23rd, the 24-hour vigil drew over NUMBER people from various faith communities. Immigration activists also attending the event citing their commitment to working with faith leaders to ensure immigrants are welcomed and treated respectfully within the community. “QUOTE,” said NAME, an activist with ORGANIZATION.

Immediately following the vigil, participants gathered at LOCATION to watch Pope Francis’s address to the United States Congress. His message of treating all people with respect, compassion, and empathy echoed the hopes of vigil participants across the nationwide movement.

“QUOTE (hopes on what will come about because of the vigil and Pope Francis’s address to Congress),” said NAME.

To learn more about the vigil and view photographs of the event, please WEBSITE (IF APPLICABLE: and #HASHTAG).

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Sample Social Media

Live Tweeting Tips

To maximize your event's reach on social media, have your supporters live tweet your event, vigil, and the Pope's address to Congress. Please see the tips below for best practices when live tweeting.

1. Use a unique hashtag when applicable. Come up with one for your event to make it easier for supporters and the media to get up-to-date information!
2. Use the speaker's Twitter handle when applicable and look them up beforehand.
3. If you aren't certain you got the quote verbatim, don't use quotation marks. Simply attribute the phrase to them.
4. Take photos and video! Using photos and videos of an interesting scene will boost your posts in follower's news stream.
5. Don't try to tweet everything. Stick to overarching topics, interesting statistics, and strong quotes from speakers.
6. To shorten a tweet, it is acceptable to use abbreviations, but don't overuse. Shorten "with" to w/, "and" to & or +. Try not to shorten "are" to "r" or "you" to "u". For longer quotes, write them down and use on Facebook or later on to recap.
7. Use congregational, church, agency, or organizational Twitter/Facebook handles when applicable.
8. Link to outside articles, referenced resources or stories, and other resources when possible. If not immediately possible, save the quote or reference to send out later – you can always follow your event with an ICYMI (In Case You Missed It) post!
9. Don't stress! Live tweeting events can seem really fast-paced, but don't stress if you miss you a quote or statistic.

Sample Social Media Posts

Providing your supporters with sample social media posts is an easy way to make sure your message is used and shared widely! See below for sample posts for both Facebook and Twitter.

"All people should be treated with respect. Join us on 9/23 for a vigil supporting @Pontifex on immigrant's rights. (link to event details)"

".@Pontifex calls for all people to be treated with respect. Join us for a prayer vigil on 9/23 supporting our immigrant brothers and sisters. (link to event details)"

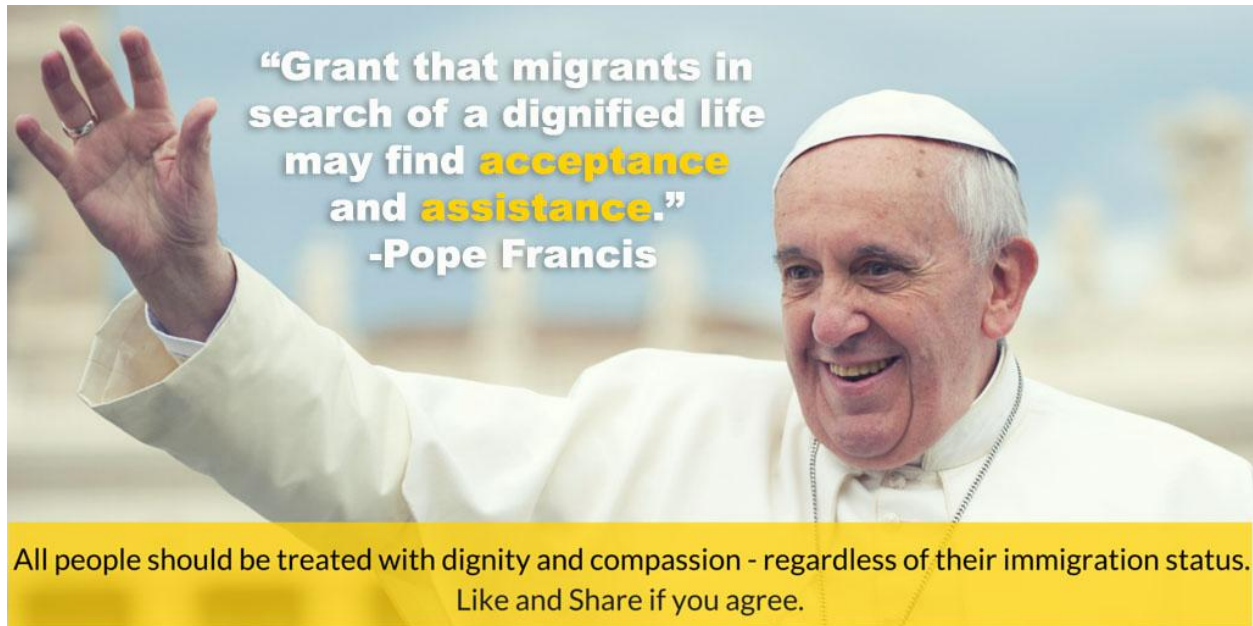
"Our faith commands us to treat #immigrants with respect. On 9/23, we will have a 24-hour vigil in support of @Pontifex's call to support our immigrant brothers and sisters. Join us! (link)"

"Stand in solidarity with @Pontifex and our immigrant brothers and sisters at a 24-hour vigil on 9/23! (link)"

"We stand with @Pontifex – all people deserve respect! Stand with us at a vigil for immigrant's rights on 9/23. (link)"

Sample Social Media Graphic

Graphics help promote an event and boost a post in your followers' newsfeeds. Feel free to use the graphic below in your social media posts or create a similar graphic of your own!



Official Schedule For Pope Francis' Visit to U.S.

Pope Francis Visits Washington D.C.

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

4pm: Pope Francis arrives in D.C. at Joint Base Andrews at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, September 23, 2015

9:15 a.m.: White House Welcoming Ceremony and personal meeting with President Obama

11:30 a.m.: Midday Prayer with U.S. bishops at Saint Matthew's Cathedral in D.C.

4:15 p.m.: Junipero Serra Canonization Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Thursday, September 24, 2015

9:20 a.m.: Speech to the Senate and House of Representatives (Joint Session of Congress)

11:15 a.m.: Visit to St. Patrick's Catholic Church and Catholic Charities

4 p.m.: Departure for New York from Joint Base Andrews (D.C.)

5 p.m.: Arrival at John F. Kennedy International Airport (New York)

6:45 p.m.: Evening prayer at St. Patrick's Cathedral (New York)

Pope Francis Visits New York

Friday, September 25, 2015

8:30 a.m.: United Nations General-Assembly

11:30 a.m.: Multi-religious service at 9/11 Memorial and Museum, World Trade Center

4 p.m.: Visit to Our Lady Queen of Angels School in East Harlem

6 p.m.: Madison Square Garden Mass

Pope Francis Visits Philadelphia

Saturday, September 26, 2015

8:40 a.m.: Departure for Philadelphia from John F. Kennedy International Airport

9:30 a.m.: Arrival in Atlantic Aviation hangar at Philadelphia International Airport Philadelphia

10:30 a.m.: Mass at Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul

4:45 p.m.: Visit to Independence Mall

7:30 p.m.: Visit to Festival of Families at Benjamin Franklin Parkway and Prayer Vigil with World Meeting of Families

Sunday, September 27, 2015

9:15 a.m.: Papal meeting with Bishops at St. Martin's Chapel, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

11 a.m.: Visit to Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility

4 p.m.: Papal Mass for World Meeting of Families

7 p.m.: Visit with organizers, volunteers and benefactors of the World Meeting of Families at Atlantic Aviation

8 p.m.: Departure for return to Rome

Events to Join from Throughout the Country

September 16th in Washington DC

Justice for Immigrants is putting together two Congressional Briefing on Immigration at 10 AM and 2 PM followed by a 12 PM Vigil and Mass at St. Peters Catholic Church

See all events the Pope will be a part of at www.popefrancisvisit.com/upcoming-events/