

# Don't Deport My Dad

INTERFAITH  
IMMIGRATION  
COALITION

Families and Faith Leaders Against Immoral Deportations

## Resources to Resist Deportation of Dads

<b>Page 2</b>	--Our Immigration System's Unjust Impacts on Dads & Families, & Prosecutorial Discretion Changes	<b>Page 7</b>	--Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Faith Communities
<b>Pages 3-4</b>	--Family Unity Is Central to Our Religious Traditions	<b>Page 8</b>	--Helping Families Prepare Emergency Care Plans
<b>Page 5</b>	--Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Families	<b>Pages 9-10</b>	--Stories of Detained & Deported Dads
<b>Page 6</b>	--Children's Letters for Dads	<b>Page 11</b>	--Actions to Help Fathers Avoid Deportation NOW!
		<b>Page 12</b>	--A Devotion in Support of Fathers
		<b>Page 13</b>	--A Prayer for Fathers



*“The Lord your God, who goes before you, will himself fight for you, just as he took your part before your very eyes in Egypt, as well as in the desert, where you saw how the Lord, your God, carried you, as a man carries his child, all along your journey until you arrived at this place”*

*—Deuteronomy 1: 30-31*

# Our Immigration System's Unjust Impacts on Dads and Families & Changes to Prosecutorial Discretion

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- ▶ In November 2014, memo guidance on the use of [Prosecutorial Discretion](#) was announced and implemented under the Obama administration. This “Prosecutorial Discretion memo” set priorities for enforcement actions, including situations in which individuals should not be deported. Factors to be considered included “length of time in the United States; military service; family or community ties in the United States; status as a victim, witness or plaintiff in civil or criminal proceedings; or compelling humanitarian factors such as poor health, age, pregnancy, a young child, or a seriously ill relative,” as well as extenuating circumstances involving any past offenses. Immigrants prioritized for deportation included those considered to be threats to national security, border security, and public safety, as well as those who had committed misdemeanors and “new immigrants” (who entered the U.S. prior to 2014), and those already ordered removed (deported) from the United States.

*Yet despite these policies, local ICE offices often refused under the Obama administration to provide Prosecutorial Discretion.*

- ▶ Under the Trump administration however, the opportunity for persons to benefit from prosecutorial discretion have diminished much more through Trump’s “[Presidential Executive Order: Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States](#).” This order greatly expands who can be considered a



“criminal,” by naming nearly all persons who are in the U.S. unlawfully as a priority for deportation. The order directs U.S. officials to put at the top of the priority list for removal persons who have been convicted, charged, or even committed acts constituting any criminal offense. It further names as priority persons who have engaged in fraud or willful misrepresentation in connection with any official or government matter. And, it prioritizes any who have abused any public benefits program or who otherwise, in the judgment of an immigration officer, pose a risk to public safety or national security.

- ▶ Then, a follow-up [implementation memo by DHS Secretary Kelly](#) outlined the deep limits on prosecutorial discretion even more. It said, “The exercise of prosecutorial discretion with regard to any alien who is subject to arrest, criminal prosecution, or removal in accordance with law shall be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the head of the field office component, where appropriate, of CBP, ICE, or USCIS that initiated or will initiate the enforcement action” and “prosecutorial discretion shall not be exercised in a manner that exempts or excludes a specified class or category of aliens from enforcement of the immigration laws.”

***In summary, prosecutorial discretion has been made exceptionally difficult to obtain in this new era—but should still be pushed for as an expression of justice and commitment to family unity!***

# Family Unity is Central to Our Religious Traditions

## Social and Historical Context:

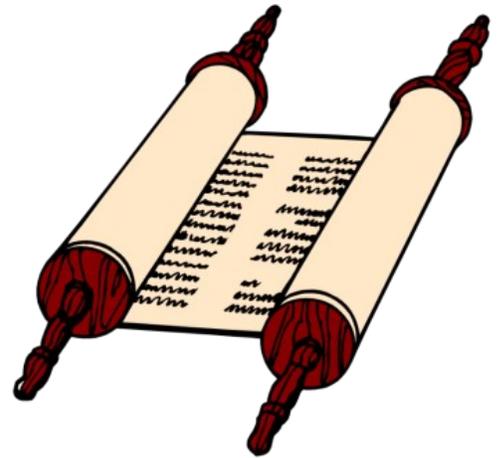
Families in the Torah were close-knit with strong feelings of family loyalty. The administration of Biblical covenants included a principle of familial inclusion, which became a core value used as a metaphor for a relationship with God. Steadfast love was the basis of the familial covenant, which created a sense of loyalty, justice, and high regard for one another. In the Torah, family has the purposes of reproduction, instruction, care giving, maintaining traditions, and conveying wisdom. For the Hebrew family, steadfast love was the heart of loyalty and solidarity. Covenants included all family relationships and have helped maintain the identity of the Hebrew family through today.

## The Torah

**Abraham and Isaac:** The story of Abraham and Isaac shows the value that God places on family. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his only son, the most important thing in his life. The surest test of Abraham's loyalty to the Lord is sacrificing his son. When Abraham shows his obedience, the Lord spares his son and blesses him with plentiful descendants. Family is the risk and family is the reward. (Genesis 22: 1-19)

**Joseph and his Brothers:** The story of Joseph, whose brothers violated the code of family covenant by selling him into slavery, shows the importance of forgiveness and family unity overcoming past wrongs. When Joseph rises to political power in Egypt, he is reunited with his brothers and accepts not only his own family into Egypt, but the entire tribe of Israel, so that they can escape the famine in the land of Canaan. (Genesis 37-50)

**Ruth and Naomi:** This well-known story highlights the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. When Ruth was widowed, she pledged her loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who had Ruth migrate with her to Bethlehem to help her re-establish herself in a new land. With the assistance of Naomi, Ruth began to work in the fields and was able to eventually marry the landowner wherein she became the great-grandmother to David. The current U.S. immigration system would not recognize the familial relationship between this mother and her daughter-in-law. (Ruth 1 and 2)

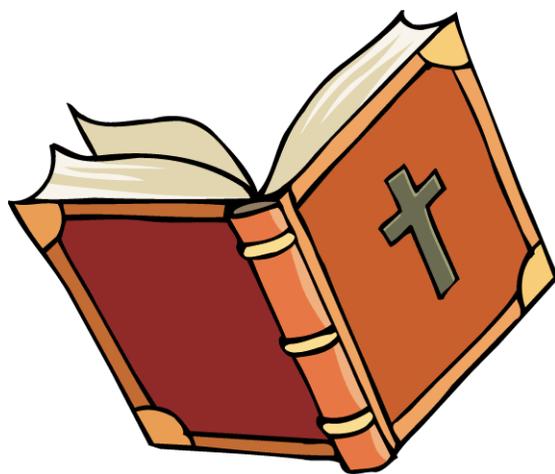


# Family Unity Is Central to Our Religious Traditions

## Christian Texts

**Mary and Jesus:** The relationship between Mary and Jesus throughout his life and especially at the time of his death points to the interconnectedness of familial strength and the fluidity of family relationships. Mary's courage in the Immaculate Conception showed the dedication and strength of motherhood that continued throughout Jesus' ministry. Jesus clearly extended his understanding of the family model to include all of his disciples. Each individual is not independent, but rather interconnected and interdependent. This points to how crucial is it to refrain from limiting the definition of family and the power that parents play in the lives of their adult children and vice-versa. (John 19:25-27)

**Mary and Martha:** The story of Mary and Martha displays the reliance that adult siblings can have on one another. Mary and Martha give one another mutual and diverse support. Martha welcomes Jesus into their home, which is an important action for Jesus and Mary's relationship. Martha points out that she needs Mary to help her do her work, exhibiting how adult siblings can depend on one another. Mary, however, is able to most fully understand and appreciate Jesus' presence; thereby teaching Martha an important lesson. The interdependence and wisdom that blossoms from these adult sisters' relationship is one so powerful that they are mentioned by name in multiple places in scripture. (Luke 10:38-42)



**The Twelve Disciples:** At least half of the twelve disciples were brothers and many more siblings were part of the larger following of Jesus. Jesus calls two pairs of brothers to follow him in his ministry. The first thing that Andrew does after he meets Jesus is share the news with his brother, Simon Peter, and together they become disciples of Jesus. The dependence and support between siblings is apparent in the story of James and John. They are fisherman together and followers of Jesus together. Jesus finds them fishing and asks that they follow him. This decision is a joint venture between the brothers. They are reliant on one another's support and trust themselves to follow Jesus together. Jesus does not collect one sibling and leave the other behind. He shows the value of sibling relationships by inviting both to follow him. As more disciples gather there is a sense that the family structure is extended to all followers, as sisters and brothers.—(Matthew 4:18–22 and 10:1-4; Mark 2:14 and 3:16-19; Luke 6:12-16; John 1:35-42)

# Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Families



Again and again, U.S. courts have found that pulling families apart brings great detriment upon children and parents—and upon all our communities. For example:

*“Families and relationships between family members occupy a place of central importance in our nation’s history and are a fundamental part of the values which underlie our society.”*  
(*Richland Park Homeowners Ass’n v. Pierce*, 671 F.2d 935, 943. 5th Cir. 1982.)

*“Separation of the alien from family living in the United States” has been deemed the “most important single factor”*

*that can establish extreme hardship for a family.”* (*Mejia-Carrillo v. U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service*, 656 F.2d 520, 522 (9th Cir. 1981.)

*“The trauma caused to an immigrant family when a member is detained is also immense; exacerbated as immigrants are often transported on average 370 miles, and are frequently sent to multiple locations. Such movement leads to further isolation from relatives, and often from legal services, as well.”* (Seth Wessler, Applied Research Ctr., *Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System* 38, 2011.)

## Studies Also Show Long-Term Harmful Impacts on Children of Deported Parents:

See two studies from the Migration Policy Institute and The Urban Institute, published in September 2015, as examples:

1. [\*Implications of Immigration Enforcement Activities for the Well-Being of Children in Immigrant Families: A Review of the Literature\*](#): *Economic and social instabilities of children in undocumented families “is further aggravated for children with a parent’s deportation, with effects including psychological trauma, material hardship, residential instability, family dissolution, increased use of public benefits, and, among boys, aggression. At the extreme end, some families became permanently separated as parents lose custody of or contact with their children.”*

2. [\*Health and Social Service Needs of US-Citizen Children with Detained or Deported Immigrant Parents\*](#): *Researchers in this publication pull from studies in CA, FL, IL, SC, and TX to report that a parent’s detention and deportation often cause economic struggle, and occasionally result in child welfare system involvement. Schools frequently provide support and trusted encouragement to families. The study indicates, “Other important sources of support include health providers, legal service providers, and community and faith-based organizations immigrants trust.”*



# Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Families

What does it feel like to a child missing their parent in detention?  
*In Children's Own Words...*



January 26 2013  
Dear Daddy  
It is me your princess Aubrey  
I am so sorry that you left on  
Thursday.  
When you left I cried so much  
Tears were dropping down my  
cheek when the men took you  
somewhere where I do not know.  
I miss you so much today.  
Daddy, I miss you taking  
me to school and picking me  
up from school everyday.  
Love  
princess Aubrey

Dear  
Mr Ford please I beg you with all  
my heart to leave my dad with us because  
we need him so he can pay the  
bills of the house, and we love  
him so much. Me and my brothers  
are so sad because we don't have  
my dad with us. We beg you not  
to send my dad to Mexico, because  
we don't want him to be killed  
over in Mexico. Please I beg you with  
all my heart to leave my dad with us  
and I promise you I will be a  
good student and I will be somebody  
in life to help this country. I thank  
you for reading this ~~letter~~ letter.

from,  
Anthony Hoz-Bria

*A daughter, at left, writes her father in detention.*

*A son, at right, writes an immigration judge  
to request his father's release from detention.*



# Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Faith Communities

## Faith Commitments To Family Unity

Faith communities place high priority upon the crucial values of steadfast love, lived in covenant commitments and mutual care for one another through familial relationships. Our sacred texts constantly call us into relationships of care between Abraham and Isaac, Joseph and his brothers, Ruth and Naomi, Mary and Jesus, Martha and Mary, and the Twelve Disciples.

## Impacts of Detention and Deportation on Faith Communities

Thus, immigrant detention and deportation often pose heartaches and hardships for faith communities as well, resulting in confusion about where to locate members, why they were removed without warning, and how to assist remaining family members to maintain contact.

Visitation policies in detention facilities are likewise highly restrictive, time consuming, and often confusing. (Nina Rabin, *Disappearing Parents: Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System*, 44 Conn. L. Rev. 99, 122-24, (2011), and Human Rights Watch, *Locked Up Far Away: The Transfer of Immigrants to Remote Detention Centers in the United States* 79-80 (2009).

And far too often, the detention and deportation of immigrants from our communities leaves great gaps in congregational leadership. Pastor Max Villatoro's local church was left without a pastor when he was deported in March of 2016. Indeed, his whole denomination, and many others with similar cases like them, are feeling the pain.

***“Pastor Max Villatoro’s case and recent deportation has brought to the forefront that undocumented people are part of our church. And not only that, they are mothers, fathers, pastors, and important members of their local communities.”***

—(Iris De León-Hartshorn, Director of Transformative Peacemaking for Mennonite Church USA, <http://mennoniteusa.org/featured-blogs/a-continued-call-to-action-justice-for-the-undocumented/> .)

***“Ruben and his wife would be our Associate Pastors, if he were not now in detention.”***

—(Rev. Lori Tapia, Co-Pastor, Iglesia Alas de Salvacion, Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, Gilbert, AZ.)

## Help Parents Prepare Emergency Plans in the Case of Detention or Deportation!



In the face of policy changes by the administration that make many more feel at risk of detention or possible deportation, families in all faith communities are reporting increased anxieties about possible family separation.

Read this article that summarizes what communities are experiencing, and how many faith groups are helping families prepare in case of the worst: *"If Mom or Dad Are Deported"*:

Go to: [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/politics/2017/03/undocumented-immigrants-who-fear-deportation-are-drafting-caretaker-plans.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2017/03/undocumented-immigrants-who-fear-deportation-are-drafting-caretaker-plans.html)

Then, consider sharing the following toolkit of "Know Your Rights" information from Catholic Legal.org, which also helps families prepare emergency plans to protect their families in the case of detention or deportation: Pay attention especially to pages 11 and 14-17 for Emergency Planning: <https://cliniclegal.org/sites/default/files/resources/presidential-transition/Know-Your-Rights-Law-Enforcement.pdf>

Also, see a similar resource from Immigrant Legal Resource Center at: [https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/family\\_preparedness\\_plan.pdf](https://www.ilrc.org/sites/default/files/resources/family_preparedness_plan.pdf). And, find detailed help for options of emergency childcare plans through the Women's Refugee Commission at: <https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/rights/gbv/resources/1409-resources-for-families-facing-deportation-separation> for a full range of resources, and especially: [file:///C:/Users/sharon/Downloads/Parental-Rights-Toolkit-ENGLISH\\_web.pdf](file:///C:/Users/sharon/Downloads/Parental-Rights-Toolkit-ENGLISH_web.pdf) (available in English and Spanish.) Especially note pages 17-26 and 130.



# Don't Deport My Dad

Families and Faith Leaders Against Immoral Deportations

## Stories of Detained/Deported Fathers

### Max Villatoro—Deported Pastor, Leader, Husband & Father



(Left: Pastor Max and his family before his deportation in 2015.

Right: His wife and children in 2017, still separated from their husband & father. Right photo from Gloria Villatoro.)

Max Villatoro, Pastor of Iglesia Menonita Torre Fuerte (First Mennonite Church) in Iowa City, came to the U.S. in 1994 and, for a time, had a temporary legal status but later lost this due to bad legal advice. He subsequently tried for several years to legalize his status, with the help of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference. Pastor Max has been a leader in his community, and his four children—Anthony, Edna, Angela, and Aileen—are U.S. citizens. His convictions, for trying to obtain a driver's license with false identification and DUI, were more than 15 years in the past and do not represent the man he is now.

Not only does Pastor Max eschew alcohol use for himself, he helps others who struggle with addictions. His positive impact on the community in Iowa City was illustrated by the thousands who rallied to his side during his detainment, including more than 40,000 who signed petitions calling for his release. Pastor Max's relatives in Honduras have been victims of murder, assault and threats due to ongoing violence there.

Unfortunately, he was deported to Honduras on March 20, 2015. He was caught in a series of ICE raids dubbed "Operation Cross Check" the first week of March which picked up more than 2,000 individuals. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sent Pastor Max away from his wife and children, his church and the country where he has lived for the past 20 years. Max was initially deported to Mexico, then went to Honduras for visa reasons and was not allowed to return to Mexico. His wife, who is a DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipient without permanent residency status, cannot confidently return back to the U.S. if she leaves the country to visit him. Thus, she has not seen him in two years, but continues to help with ministry at the church. Max's four U.S. citizen children can freely travel to see their father, but are prohibited by travel costs.

Many, like Max, have worked and grown families in the U.S. for decades and leave behind families and communities who are devastated by their loss. See the update article on Pastor Max's case in *The Mennonite* magazine, from 4/26/17: <https://themennonite.org/daily-news/two-years-later-villatoro-family-still-separated/>

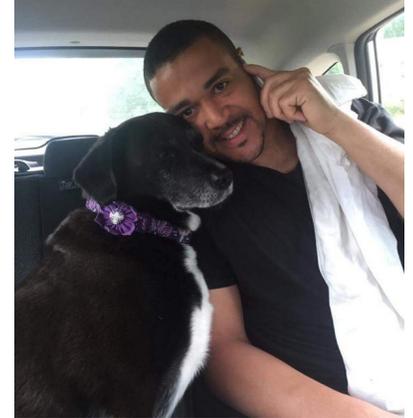
# Stories of Detained/Deported Fathers Recently in the News

**Read about and continue to follow and ACT to help these fathers who are experiencing the pain of detention and/or deportation:**



Mar 29, 2017 - The daughter of a Los Angeles man arrested by federal immigration agents last month says her father is “suffering” <http://www.dailynews.com/social-affairs/20170329/family-of-immigrant-dad-detained-by-ice-says-hes-suffering>

Meet 3 dads detained by ICE this week – ThinkProgress: <https://thinkprogress.org/meet-3-dads-whose-ice-detentions-you-havent-heard-about-this-week-9bc6c92f226a>



**Ched Nin: A Cambodian won deportation relief**

<http://www.searac.org/new/cambodian-refugee-husband-and-father-facing-deportation-country-he-has-never-seen>

<http://www.searac.org/new/breaking-cambodian-deportation-halted-due-groundswell-community-support>

**Souen "Posy" Chheng: He was deported to Cambodia before ever meeting his newborn son. The day after going into labor, his wife found out he was being sent back to Cambodia**

<http://www.searac.org/new/souen-chheng-releasemn8-continues-his-fight-stay-us-amidst-next-round-deportations-cambodia>

<https://www.cambodiadaily.com/news/new-father-could-face-deportation-from-us-within-days-128954/>

**Chamroeun "Shorty" Phan: A Cambodian issued deportation relief from a judge but still sits in detention because DHS has appealed that decision. He has been detained for 10 months. BIA is currently reviewing the case**

<http://www.searac.org/new/releasemn8-campaign-wins-second-victory-chamroeun-phans-deportation-delayed>

<http://www.searac.org/new/press-release-chamroeun-phan-releasemn8-wins-deportation-relief-trump-administration-likely-appe>



**Take  
Action!**

# Don't Deport My Dad

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**INTERFAITH  
IMMIGRATION  
COALITION**

Use this **“Don’t Deport My Dad” Toolkit** to hold Vigils and Act on or near Father’s Day—or adjust for another day—to raise faith voices against family separation and deportation:

<http://www.interfaithimmigration.org/2017/06/07/fathers-day-vigils-toolkit-dontdeportmydad/>

- ▶ **Hold Vigils:** Use talking points in the toolkit that
- Honor the contributions of all immigrant fathers.
- Urge President Trump and Secy of Homeland Security Kelly to stop detaining and deporting families
- Immigrant families are pillars of their families and our communities
- Immigrants and refugees work hard to build a good future for their children and our communities



- ▶ **Read and Sign Petitions to Help These Dads in Sanctuary:**

<http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org/dont-deport-my-dad.html>



David Chavez Macias in Reno, Nevada



Jose Juan Moreno in Chicago, Illinois



Sixto Paz de la Torre in Phoenix, AZ

- ▶ **Use these Sample Tweets:**

- Today we're praying for all the immigrant dads that make this country great #DontDeportMyDad #FathersDay #HereToStay
- For #FathersDay, we celebrate immigrant & refugee dads. They work hard for their children, and also for our communities.
- Children of immigrant dads make a powerful call to @POTUS for #FathersDay:Don't deport my dad.
- We honor dads and pray for those facing deportation. #DontDeportMyDad
- Immigrant fathers past & present sought the American Dream not for themselves, but for their children's future. #DontDeportMyDad

## Devotion—Camp Tales From Moses

***“The Lord your God...will fight for you, just as he did for you in Egypt... and in the wilderness...where you saw...God carried you, as a father carries a child, all the way that you traveled.”—Deuteronomy 1:30-31***

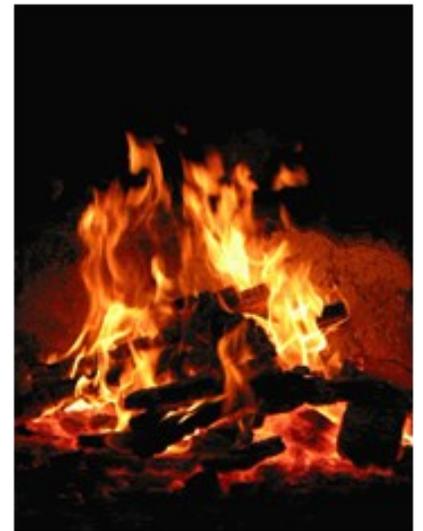
Warm weather seasons remind many families of camping stories; tales of fish caught, meals grilled, storms endured, mosquitos fought. For our ancient Hebrew faith family in the book of Deuteronomy, “camp tales” shared on the edge of the Promised Land included a review of God’s presence with them throughout history. Camping there--on the plain of Moab, after decades of journeying sometimes forward and sometimes backwards in obedience and faith—the Israelites were reminded they had NEVER been separated from God. Their journey started with promises to their ancestors in Egypt. It was delayed as they suffered as slaves in Egypt. It re-commenced when they escaped as refugees. It at points veered off track as they wandered and complained, in the desert.

But as Moses took great care to remind them as they encamped at the climax of their decades-long odyssey, God in every moment went BEFORE them. Not many gathered by their tents and listening to Moses would likely have been on the full 40 years of their ancestors’ journey. A few elders may have experienced every hope and every challenge through the years since the granting of the Mosaic Law on Mount Sinai. Parents likely held in their hearts some stories of “promises made” and trust fractured en route. The youngest kids may not have known much about previous battles fought or grumblings along the way.

The message Moses gave to unify them all for entry into their futures ahead, though, was to remember that God would FIGHT for them in the eras before, even as God had rescued them from Pharaoh in Egypt; against all odds, ensuring that love conquered over political power to thwart or enslave them. And, to ensure they would forever feel confident that no future threats could overcome them, Moses reminded God’s people how God CARRIED THEM like a father upholds a beloved child to seek their safety, protect them, and deliver them to a secure place. Moses’ “campfire message” to the Israelites is “a law that delivers”; restoring hope, reducing fear, assuring protection and comfort. For today’s immigrants and advocates who seek to support them, it offers an encouragement to work for laws within our own nation which offer the same values of assurance.

Prosecutorial discretion had helped to reinforce just those values. It offered religious leaders and community members the chance to speak in support of the gifts of their members. One pastor offered this testimony to the courts, on behalf of his church leader who was then detained: “My life and profession have been spent offering words and an ethos that second chances are not deserved, (but rather) such favor is ‘grace.’ Grace can be offered by the most unanticipated institutions and communities toward the most unimaginable recipients—grace is judgment saturated with mercy....I pray that (my detained church member) might benefit from an act of mercy executed by our courts.” Faith partners in this era must continue to urge for the use and expansion of prosecutorial discretion.

In the flicker of the campfire, and spoken in the flickering last month of his long life—Moses likewise called God’s people then to remember God’s constant outpouring of grace. And so we hear his call now that we, too, might offer such grace to those encamped as migrants among us--including by advocating for them to receive mercy through prosecutorial discretion.



# A Prayer for Immigrant Fathers

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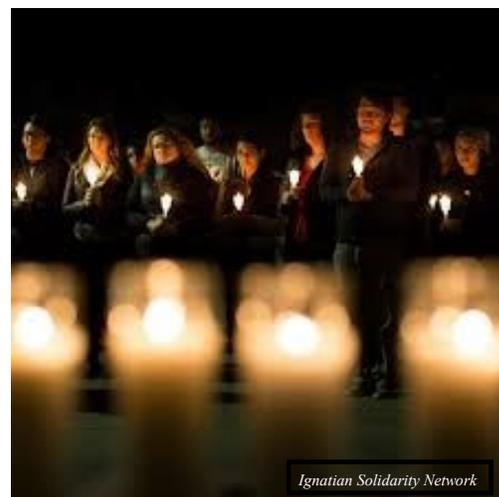
*God, Father of us all, we pray with loving gratitude for our dads, living and deceased.*

*We pray especially for the many fathers who have been separated from their families by U.S. deportation policies, and for those dads who fear being deported.*

*We pray for children who cry at night for their dads, youths who miss the strength and love their dads offer, and the mothers who struggle to provide for them.*

*We pray that our country's shameful practices of detention and deportation that separate fathers from their families may soon be ended, so that families may be whole again.*

*While we pray to you, Father God, we also renew our commitment to work for an end to separation of immigrant families. Amen.*



*(Prayer by Sister Marie Lucey, Franciscan Action Network)*

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