



Reflection for Fourth Week of Lent

(Thanks to Alice Marie Giordano, osu)

*“Isolation and withdrawal into one’s own interests are never
the way to restore hope and bring about renewal.
Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter.”*

Pope Francis – Fratelli Tutti

In Pope Francis’s new book, “Let Us Dream” he urges us to **dream together** and he offers us, with a great sense of hope, “**a new normal**”.

In all of his writings Francis has helped us to see that everything is **connected** and he has urged us to a deeper consciousness of **relationship**. He asks us to create **moments of encounter**, **listening** to the stories of others, **feeling their pain**, treating all with **deep respect**.

NOW, more than ever before, we must heed his message.

Fifty three days into our Biden-Harris Administration a “new normal” is emerging. The Covid Relief Bill is already addressing the suffering of Americans with great compassion. And now

attention turns to the people in our world who are in motion, migrants, forced by poverty, climate crisis, violence, and other unbearable conditions to seek refuge in our United States. And **what are we to do?**

Sr. Norma Pimental, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, Rio Grande Valley, on a recent zoom, told us, with tears in her eyes, about witnessing the emptying of the migrant camp at Matamoros last week. Children were returned to their parents and together crossed the bridge of entry into our country and were greeted with respect by the guards in attendance. She also told of the many more young people who are coming and asked for monetary and in person help.

<http://www.catholiccharitiesrgv.org/>



How can we advocate?

President Biden has offered us the **US Citizenship Act of 2021**. (HR 1177/S347). This will provide a road map to citizenship for **11 million** undocumented immigrants.

But this will take a lot of debate and a great deal of time to become law. And so we must consider those who make up the 11 million.

There are the Dreamers who can be saved by the **Dream Act of 2021 (S254)**. This will reach out to **2 million** undocumented young people, DACA recipients, and other immigrant youth who have had the opportunity to work, pursue their dreams, and contribute to their communities and become part of the fabric of our society.

There are **5 million** essential workers, critical to our food supply, like farmworkers and grocery store employees, as well as teachers and first responders, providing health care as doctors, nurses and home health aides and keeping health care settings open and safe as custodians, food servers, administrative workers. They will be helped by the **Legalization of Essential Workers Act** and their legalization will improve the health of our nation during the pandemic and boost our economic recovery.

There are the children. **The Protection for Kids in Detention Act (PROKID)** aims to provide an essential layer of oversight to

ensure transparency, protection and accountability for all immigrant children in any type of government custody.

There are the women and children. **The Central American Women and Children Protection Act (S1781)** This bill authorizes the Department of State to enter into bilateral agreements with the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to assist such countries in addressing violence against women and children, addressing one of the root causes of migration.

Ban of the Trump Administration 2019 Public Charge Rule. Because this has been banned, undocumented immigrants may now safely have access to health and nutrition programs without fear of deportation.



How can we come to know these Sisters and Brothers?

Here are two films that may help us to do this:

Right the Wrong: Border Stories <https://fb.watch/48E-hQ9sv9/>

Oh Mercy: Searching for Hope in the Promised Land
<https://vimeo.com/519757135>