

Solidarity Reflection & Challenge

The economic and socially-oppressive standard of life in Latin America leaves little choice than to migrate to a land of greater opportunity; however, the road to this dream does not offer much repose. The journey to the United States is perilous and often entails crossing miles of desert where many run the risk of heat-stroke, exhaustion, and dehydration. Riding atop the box-cars of trains during the night is another common practice, but this option poses considerable risk as gangs who stake claim of the train tops rob and assault those on board. Further, rainstorms and tree branches often cause many passengers of the trains to fall off, where the wheels of the train cause some to lose their limbs or their lives.

Along the hazardous path of the immigrant, there are some areas that provide respite to these travellers. Shelters such as the *Albergue Jesus el Buen Pastor del Pobre y Migrante* (Jesus the Good Shepherd of the poor and migrant) in Chiapas, Mexico, offer hospitality to weary migrants and care for amputees. Through the generosity of these shelters, many people who can scarce carry their cross any longer find the care that reminds them of their human dignity.

The journey to the United States is a dangerous gamble, but to procure a better life for one's family pushes many to take on this risk. There are many uncertain paths in our lives, and many of our friends and neighbors are walking in times of darkness. We are in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors when we also courageously journey through life's hardships. Throughout our walks, and our week, let us consider the following:

- *"We are pilgrims on the journey, we are brothers on the road. We are here to help each other walk the mile and bear the load"* (The Servant Song). Who are the people close to me who are on a difficult journey? How might I offer my comfort to them as we travel as brothers and sisters on the road to the homeland of Heaven?
- What are the challenges I face in my own life? Where do I draw strength for this journey?

Solidarity Challenge: Attempt to offer your encouragement to those who may be overburdened from their journey. Even if this is just smiling and greeting those whom you may pass on your walks, you never know how this positivity could brighten someone's day. "For I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

Prayer:

Lord, be my rock of refuge, a mighty stronghold to save me. You are my rock and my fortress, for your name's sake lead me and guide me. (Psalm 31:3-4).

Further reading: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2013/08/an-immigrants-journey/100573/>