



breadfortheworld
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

Prayers for the Immigration Crisis

The prayers below were written by Rev. José Luis Casal, a general missionary from Midland, Texas, in the Presbytery of Tres Rios (part of the Presbyterian Church (USA)). These prayers were used in a worship and communion service that Casal led at the fence on the border between Texas and Mexico. At the worship service on the other side of the fence were members of the Presbyterian Church of Mexico. Casal reports: “They gathered on their side of the border, and our presbyterian commissioners and visitors gathered on our side, and we worship together and celebrated communion together. Particularly emotional was the moment when we began to touch the hands of our Mexican brothers and sisters through the wired fence. It was powerful message broadcasted by three national TV stations.”

By providing these prayers here, Casal gives permission for them to be used (and adapted, if necessary) by others elsewhere. Casal suggests: The prayer could be read by one person or divided to be read alternately by a leader and group (more effective this way). In this case, just assign one paragraph to the leader and the next one to the group.

Prayer for the Human Tragedy Beyond the Immigration Debate

Holy God, your presence transcends all human-made borders, and your love crosses all boundaries. Help us join you at the borders, and help us to extend some hope to those who live without a future and dignity at the border. We pray that you help us to promote laws that protect the rights and dignity of everyone, especially those most vulnerable. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

God of justice, your loves transcends our limitations and our unfair rules that discriminate against human beings and divide humankind. We pray that the dignity of all God's children will be acknowledged and protected in every country of the world, but especially in our country. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

God of mercy, your wisdom transcends our limited understanding and our conditioned charity. Help us to end the violence and poverty that displaces so many people from their homes and homelands to find new dreams and horizons. We pray that employers and corporations may choose the dignity and worth of each human person over profit and power. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

God of all peoples, your merciful compassion transcends our unlimited selfishness that condemns millions of people around the world to lives of misery, hunger, sickness and utter hopelessness. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

Creator and sustainer, we offer our prayers for the children who cross the border looking for a better education because of the lack of opportunities in their own countries. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our**

prayer.]

For victims of human trafficking forced into to slave labor and prostitution while they pursue the American dream. For the multitude of refugees, forced from their homes to alien places through war or through the destruction of their environment. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

For the migrant workers who are forced to travel to other countries looking for better salaries because there are not fairly remunerated in jobs in their countries. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

God of all nations, we are indeed a nation of nations. Help us to incorporate newcomers into the ever-growing and diverse body we call the United States of America. You made us different yet all bearing your image. [Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**]

As we work to live in community with our brothers and sisters, help us to discern that image in those around us. God of all cultures, races and languages, give us the wisdom to find the way to proclaim comprehensive immigration reform to restore the dignity of millions of men and women who live in darkness and to reshape the image of the country that is proud to be the land of free and the home of the brave. In your holy name we pray. **Amen.**

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Bread for the World has recently started sharing via its blog weekly prayers for the countries of the world and their work in ending hunger (follow the series [here](#)). The prayers are based on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, provided by the World Council of Churches. Serendipitously, the countries assigned for the weeks of July 13-19 and July 20-26 are for, respectively, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama; and Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. Here are Bread's prayers for these groups of countries:

July 13-19: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama

Lord, we pray for these Central American countries, where hunger and poverty persist and force people to leave their lands for an opportunity at a better life. We pray for the unaccompanied children who leave these countries and come to our country, where they don't know the language, don't have family, and are met by people who have forgotten your message of love and welcome. We pray for the families that have to make the agonizing decision to send their children away. May your love console and protect them. Amen.

Percentage of the population below the poverty line in these countries:

Costa Rica	24.8% (2011 est.)
El Salvador	36.5% (2010 est.)
Nicaragua	42.5% (2009 est.)
Panama	26% (2012 est.)

Source: [The World Factbook](#) of the CIA

July 20-26: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico

Holy God, your love extends to all people, and your image is graven upon every soul. The whole world is filled with your glory. We turn our hearts and prayers this week to lift up in love and faith the men, women, and children who live in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. We ask that you would strengthen those who are weary, feed those who are hungry, and bring justice to those who are oppressed. We also ask that you would strengthen us to show compassion and mercy to the immigrants and refugees from these lands who we are privileged to welcome with hospitality and love within our own borders. We especially pray for the thousands of children who are pouring into our nation seeking a respite from their suffering and a relief from their distress, both from these nations, as well as from other places. May your grace empower us to welcome, serve, and protect these little children so that we might model your loving embrace to these, the least among us. In your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

Percentage of the population below the poverty line in these countries:

Belize	41% (2013 est.)
Guatemala	54% (2011 est.)
Honduras	60% (2010 est.)
Mexico	52.3% (2012 est. based on food-based definition of poverty; asset based poverty amounted to more than 47%)

Source: [The World Factbook](#) of the CIA