

Pastor's Ponderings . . .

A big concern among advocates for justice for immigrants and refugees is taking a mother or father away from their family who needs them and returning someone to the very danger and violence in their home country from which they fled. Although they may have broken the law, they are not "hard and fast" criminals. Nor are they a danger and a threat to our country or to anyone. On the contrary, they can be a hard working provider and parent for their family. They can be involved with their parish community of faith and very good people. My St. Leo experience is teaching me this profound truth.

Many undocumented immigrants have children who are born in the USA and are American citizens by birth. If their parents are deported, what happens to the m? I can't imagine having to decide if my child should stay or not stay in a country from which I am being deported! If the kids stay, what happens to the m? I heard a story about an immigrant parent who approached an elderly woman in her faith community and asked her to take her child if she were to be deported. The elderly woman said, "I am so sorry. I would like to but I am just not able. I am too old." The immigrant woman responded that she understood but she wanted the elderly woman to understand why she still had to make the request. She said, "You are the only one I know."

Such situations, hardships, divisions and difficulties are enough to convince me that deportation is not the answer for immigration reform. There has to be a better way or other ways. I ask you to join with us in praying for immigration reform and doing whatever you can civilly to stop deportation. Calling and writing your representatives in Congress and joining social action efforts in your parishes and dioceses are still good things to do. This doesn't always seem to me to be effective but one voice when added to voices of others makes for a strong witness. We must keep trying.

Also, it is important to live the Law of Love for everyone right now. Love, kindness, holiness conquers fear and lets us know we are not alone. Love gives us the strength and proper attitude to accept the inevitable and to trust in God for direction and guidance. Love helps us see the good with the bad and points us in

the way of new life and new opportunities. We can always depend on our faith and turn to God in time of need. The Lord hears the cry of the poor! Blessed be God! "I came not to condemn but to save," says the Lord. May the Church of God find clear ways to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ especially for our immigrant and refugee families who are most in need right now.



Faith IS NOT KNOWING
WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS,
BUT KNOWING
who holds the future.

I am so thankful for all of our friends, partners, parishioners and the beautiful and wonderful diversity that makes up our parish community. Together, we are making a difference and sharing faith and being Church together makes the biggest difference for us all. We are growing our Sunday Mass attendance. Full to standing room only is a common occurrence at both of our weekend Masses. We have had the most people, adults and children, seek and receive the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist or Confirmation or all three together during the entire Easter Season than we have had for a very long time. Our principal that "if we can learn to pray together, we can do anything together is bearing much fruit.

Much has been taken from our parishioners through the years and there is always the threat that more can be taken. But the one thing that has remained, and we believe always will, is our faith. This faith brings us to the Eucharistic table each week and our celebrations are deep and vibrant because we know how God has truly blessed us with each other and with loving hearts that keep on loving through all diversity and adversity. Although much can be taken, we still have much to give because the Lord came to give us life and to have it in abundance. This is our faith. It is the faith of the Church and we are all proud to profess it in Christ Jesus, Our Lord. Thanks for being Church and sharing your faith with us. Amen. Alleluia!

— Fr. Jim

St. Leo's Prayer Wall is a place where all, regardless of age, race or creed, are invited to sing God's praises, give Him thanks, and/or call upon His presence for help in times of need. The wall, a place of prayer for all peoples (much like the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem), captures the faces of the community, as well as peacemakers and saints who have inspired us through the ages.



The Wall is a place for staff and volunteers, youth groups, community meetings, and for individuals who pass through our parking lot on the way to work, school, etc., to pray, reflect and pause. We invite you to share in this special way of prayer, joy, and thanksgiving. Praise God!

God cares about every need in your life and knows what you need even before you ask Him for help. Our St. Leo the Great parish community promises to remember you in our private prayer, as well as in our communal prayer, which is to say that we are praying for you all the time.

All prayer requests are held in strictest confidence. **Send your prayer request to:** Saint Leo the Great Church, 2573 Saint Leo Place, Cincinnati, OH 45225. You can also submit your prayer request online at: <http://saint-leo/WorksofMercy/PrayerWallMinistry.aspx>.