



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

7 Sessions for Advent & Epiphany

Including 4 Weeks of Advent, Christmas, Holy Family Feast & Epiphany

Advent, Week 1: Encountering Black Migrants Enduring Violence

Advent, Week 2: Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

Advent, Week 3: Seeking Light & Freedom through Lasting Protections

Advent, Week 4: Building Peace Amid Deportation Threats

Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope Beyond COVID

Holy Family Feast: Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

Epiphany: Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

Each week offers scripture, spiritual reflection & question, stories of black migrants, actions, and a prayer.

INTERFAITH
IMMIGRATION
COALITION

Encourage others to sign up to receive a copy at:

<http://www.bit.ly/BlackMigrantsJourneys>

*Thanks to all members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's
"Holy Days & Holidays" Team who partnered to develop this resource!*

Find this and other faith resources online at: <https://bit.ly/IICReligiousResources>

Questions or Comments? Contact: sstanley@dhm.disciples.org, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Team Chair



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Advent, Week 1: Freeing Black Migrants Enduring Violence

Scripture: *We have all become like one unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.... Yet Lord, we are the clay, and You are our potter.”*
(Is. 64:6,8)

Reflection:

As we begin this week the soul-full season of waiting for the “advent” or “coming” of Christ, the scriptures pull us to a time towards the end of the sixth century when God’s people—exiled for generations in Babylonia—had now been returned through God’s grace to Palestine. Their precious temple had even been rebuilt! Yet despite God’s constant call to them to enact justice and “let the oppressed go free,” they remained a community of “both wheat and tares.” Isaiah offered a confession of how, despite God’s faithfulness, the hearts of many had become corrupted.

Our society today likewise must confront our unrighteousness, inequities, and discrimination; made tragically clearer in these years of pandemic and racial reckoning. A part of our own “polluted” reality is how the 600,000+ black undocumented immigrants in the U.S. report constant traumas enacted through our immigration and carceral systems. Like all Blacks in the U.S., immigrants from African, Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latinx origins are over-policed, and then often turned over to ICE.

The [Black Alliance for Just Immigration](#)/BAJI reports that, while Black immigrants are just 7% of the non-citizen population in the U.S., they make up 20% of immigrants fighting deportations—despite any evidence they have committed more crimes.

RAICES also [unveils](#) the lengthiest recorded ICE incarcerations are of Black African migrants, and solitary confinement is disproportionately used against African and Caribbean descent immigrants in detention. Bond amounts in family detention during recent years have also been set at 54% higher for Haitians than others.



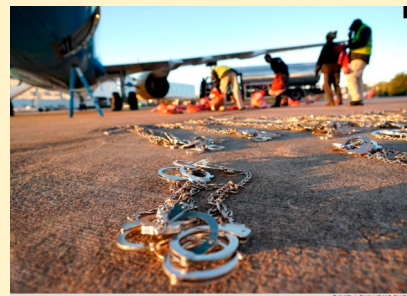
Image from Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)

(Continued)

Advent, Week 1: Encountering Black Migrants Enduring Violence *Continued*

Question:

How can we confess our sins towards black immigrants in this season, ask God to re-shape our commitments to grow anti-racism and justice for Black immigrants, and seek their freedom from detention now?



Story:

One year ago on October 13th, over 90 migrants were put aboard [mass deportation flights](#). Many were Cameroonian asylum seekers, [terrified for their lives](#) of being returned to a nation where over 700,000 have been displaced by civil war. As some attempted to protest in fear, five men were placed in painful restraints called “[The WRAP](#)” that held them in stress positions throughout the flight—despite already also being bound by five point restraints.

This year, on the October 13th anniversary of the first of two mass deportation flights to Cameroon, black migrant and civil rights organizations [filed a complaint](#) on behalf of five men deported while restrained by “The WRAP”. [The WRAP complaint](#) details how ICE agents abused the FDA-registered medical device of “The WRAP” to threaten, coerce, and punish with torture African asylum seekers being sent back to harm. One of the men restrained described, “I truly felt I was meeting my death in that moment,” states one party to The WRAP complaint. Another describes being in The WRAP as “one of the most terrifying and dehumanizing experiences of my life.”

Action:

Since filing a complaint on October 13, 2021, on the anniversary of the first of two mass deportation flights to Cameroon, complainants have been interviewed by DHS Civil Rights Civil Liberties investigators. However, no response has yet been offered about DHS’ intent to open full investigations into the use and abuses of The WRAP.

- [CLICK HERE NOW](#) to add your organizational or congregational name to [this letter](#), which will be sent to targeted MOCs and Congressional committee chairs this week, on November 30, 2021.
- [LISTEN](#) to Witness at the Border’s Podcast about The WRAP.

Prayer:

God who chose to enter the world in the form of a child born humbly, as we move towards celebration of your birth this season, help us hold near the children and families on journeys seeking safety in our own world today. Keep us confessing the discrimination in our racist immigration structures, and help us halt pain and instead grow justice. Teach us to act in solidarity for the protection of those seeking security from dangers, and healing from harms. Amen.

*Writer: Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea-Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries &
Assistant: Ellie Hutchison Cervantes-IIC*



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Advent, Week 2: Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

Scripture: “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her she had served her term.” (Isaiah 40:1)

Reflection: The scriptures remind that ours is a God who is ready to offer comfort and care after seasons of struggle. We, as people of God, are sinful. We are sinful in how we relate to creation; we are sinful in how we relate to each other; we are sinful in how we relate to God. We cause suffering and pain. However, God’s grace, love, and comfort are more powerful than our sinful nature. As migrants flee situations exacerbated by sinfulness, God’s comfort is greatly needed as they travel, sometimes over 7 or more countries, before arriving at US borders.

Question: *How might you help offer God’s comfort to migrants who are seeking protection from pain and suffering?*

Story: This story is about “Danielle,” whose name is changed due to her sensitive and pending asylum case. As civil unrest spiked between 2015 and 2016 in Cameroon, Danielle witnessed her community caught between government forces and succession fighters. Joining student groups to protest the violence, arrests, and torture, she called for a ceasefire and peaceful dialogues between government forces and Anglophone successionists. Soon she became a target of the government.



Internally Displaced Persons in Douala, Image: VOA

Arrested and assaulted, she knew she had to flee; flying to South America and walking thousands of miles to request protection from the United States. When exhausted, alone, or afraid while en route, she would call out to God. Once arriving in Tijuana and without Spanish, she experienced extortion, threats, and robbery were common. Fortunately, she traveled with other Cameroonian nationals to create some sense of safety and protection, and church groups and organizations provided support. Danielle and the Cameroonian group waited their turn to present themselves to Customs and Border Protection. Finally, her number was called.

(Continued)

Lighting the Candles: A Journey with Black Migrants

Advent, Week 2: Sharing Hope and Community at the Border

Continued

Danielle now encourages immigrant rights groups in the United States to push for an end to the Migrant Protection Protocols/“Remain in Mexico” Program that denies so many their human rights.

Actions:



Photo from Paul Jeffery, ACT, in WCC news here.

- In several sites along the U.S.-Mexico border, groups on both sides host monthly #SaveAsylum vigils to witness to the abusive policies of U.S. immigration officials as they blatantly prohibit people from accessing asylum while disregarding international treaties, human rights laws, and U.S. sanctioned law. Learn more at Kino Border Initiative’s website <https://www.saveasylum.org/>, and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Kino.Border.Initiative>
- Learn more about the diversity of experiences of Black immigrants at the U.S.-Mexico border from the Black Alliance for Just Immigration’s Report at <http://baji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/black-lives-at-the-borderfinal-2.pdf>
- Espacio Migrante provides a variety of support for diverse populations in Tijuana. Find out how you can help, by going to <https://www.espaciomigrante.org/>.
- Al Otro Lado offers legal support of many Black immigrants in Tijuana. Find out more at <https://alotrolado.org/>.

Prayer:

Go to <https://bit.ly/CameroonPrayer> to read “A Prayer for Cameroon and the Cameroonian People,” written by Valery Nodem—a Cameroonian national serving as an Associate for International Hunger Concerns with the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Here is an excerpt:

“Lord our God, we raise our voices to you and pray for your people affected by the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. Violence in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon over the past few years has left families in mourning, destroyed communities, limited access to education for hundreds of thousands of young people, and plunged millions of people into despair.... Those who have managed to flee the violence to seek refuge, asylum and security in the United States are brutally pushed back and sent back to Cameroon. Protect those who have been...sent back to the same crisis, we pray.” Amen.

Writer: Amanda Craft-PCUSA & Assistant: Gavin Sylvia-CWS



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Advent, Week 3: Seeking Light & Freedom through Lasting Protections

Scripture: *“The Lord...has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners...For I the Lord love justice.”* (Is. 61:1,8)

Reflection: The Scripture passages of this third week of Advent are about liberation, a better future, and when the promise of God will be fulfilled. It is an invitation to look at a world where justice and compassion will prevail because the Lord is and loves justice. There is no other way to be in this world for us who claim to be the followers of that promise. As we light the third candle of our advent wreath this year, we are reminded as a nation of how little light with which we have surrounded ourselves. We think of migrants, especially Black migrants, to whom we did not offer liberation or healing. Rather, we have too often offered only temporary protections, or closed them in unjust detentions in conditions for which the prophet Isaiah or John the Baptist would forcefully rebuke us—and there is no end in sight. Lord, help us as a nation to heed your call to justice and to mercy.



Question:

How can we fulfill the promise of this season of light unless we release those unjustly detained and seek lasting, and hopefully permanent, protections?

Story: “Pastor Ben” shared his experiences as a panelist at an Interfaith Immigration Coalition forum called “From Africa to Deportation: Black Africans Confront the U.S. Asylum System.” After fleeing persecution in Nigeria and arriving in the United States, he was immediately taken into detention. He continued, “I was told I would see the judge in two weeks,” but the time stretched to “five years and two months only because I asked for asylum at the airport.” Co-hosts at the forum, the Cameroon American Council and Immigration Justice Campaign, exposed how ICE’s technically termed ‘detention facilities’ are “really prisons” that “fuel the deportation machinery” and are typically located in rural areas without access to nearby immigration attorneys, translators, or interpreters.

While in detention, Pastor Ben spoke of how he “became a jailhouse lawyer, studied in the law library, learned Spanish and became familiar with other languages” to help inmates”

(Continued)

Advent, Week 3, Continued:
Seeking Light Seeking Light & Freedom through Lasting Protections

find legal assistance. Detainees in U.S. centers hail from across Africa, including Guinea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, and more. Read [here](#) about how African asylum seekers encounter shameful treatment in U.S. detention centers, and how detention and unjust risks are also faced by [Mauritanians in Ohio](#), like Saidu Sow who lived in Cincinnati for decades, has a U.S. citizen daughter, and entered as a refugee.

Actions:

Hear this Call to Action by **Guerline Josef, Executive Director of Haitian Bridge Alliance and winner of the 2021 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award**. “Our call to action, as I have said many times, is for us to come together.... Together we will see, ‘Anpil men, chay pa lou,’ which means, ‘many hands lighten the load.’ Let’s continue to win protection and freedom and liberation for all our brothers and sisters.”



- See [this letter](#) by faith and human rights leaders through the [Cameroon Advocacy Network](#), sent on October 25th to key Administration officials, demanding long lasting protections for Black immigrants through Temporary Protected Status or Deferred Enforced Departure. Find more background in IIC’s Press Release [here](#).
- Sign this [petition](#) to President Biden, VP Harris, and DHS Secretary Mayorkas urging they grant TPS for the 40,000 Cameroonians in the U.S. in urgent need of protection, including those currently subjected to racist treatment and violence in ICE detention.
- Follow [here](#) about investigations into detention center abuses; particularly against Black immigrants from Haiti, the DRC, Cameroon and elsewhere. Call your Members of Congress at (202) 224-3121 to ask them to urge accountability for abuses.

Prayer:

Lord God, help us to remember those who tonight will go to sleep unfed and unwelcome, strangers in foreign lands, detained in unjust detention conditions, people who have fled for their lives and are far from their homes. We lift up to you those who are escaping persecution and conflict, having fled death, torture or ruthless exploitation.

So many carry wounds, mental and physical. So many have suffered greatly. Lord, give us more of your compassion for their plight, soften our hearts to their situation, and help us follow your lead in seeking justice and mercy on their behalf. We pray for an end to the wars, poverty and human rights abuses that drive desperate people to become refugees in the first place. We give thanks for people working in troubled countries and ask for more of your blessing so we can concretely consider how we will respond and are willing to risk in this Holy Season and the years ahead to bring liberty and healing to migrants currently detained. We pray in the name of the One born a refugee. Amen. (Adapted from “[Strangers in a Foreign Land](#),” by an Unknown Author)

Writer: Sister Maria Orlandini-Franciscan Action Network & Assistant: Viviana Westbrook-CLINIC



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Advent, Week 4: Building Peace Amid Deportation Threats

Scripture: *“I will provide a place for my people Israel and plant them so they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did.”* 2 Samuel 7:10

Reflection: David’s descendants yearned for a safe home and God heard their cry. No one is ‘home’ when they are violently oppressed, terrorized or starving. On the contrary, home means safe and free; and every human being deserves to get home. In the U.S., many white people simply assume they will make it home at night. Citizens of color often run a gauntlet of racist interferences before they make it home. For most immigrants of color, making it home can be a soul crushing, desperate race. They face violent oppression and/or abject poverty in their birth country and they are pleading for us to let them finally be home and safe. Black immigrants did not, by accident of birth, inherit a safe home. So to make it home, immigrants of color need the followers of God to help them. Our directive from God is clear: oppose the wicked people who oppress our brothers and sisters of color and let them plant roots, let them make it home.

Question: *How will you share realities of unjust deportations with your friends and elected leaders, in order to help stop inhumane practices?*

Story: [Washington Post](#) shared the story of a young Haitian named Paulnick “Nicko” Archelus, 28, and the woman he met en route, 25 year old Nayou Jean-Pierre. Nicko was a teenager when the 2010 earthquake killed 220,000 and devastated his island nation. Still, he studied civil engineering in a university—but there were no jobs when he graduated. So he joined many Haitians journeying to South America in search of opportunity. After working many years in Costa Rica, but unable to obtain residency, he continued his journey of 6,000+ miles through many countries. Nicko and Nayou eventually arrived in Mexico, and were among the many to travel back and forth across the Rio Grande from Del Rio, Tex., to Ciudad Acuña, Mexico this Fall. They chose eventually to stay in an abandoned nightclub hastily



Haitian migrants cross the jungle of the Darien Gap on Sept. 26, while trying to reach the United States. (AFP/Getty Images)

(The Darien Gap is in Panama.)

(Continued)

Advent, Week 4: Building Peace Amid Deportation Threat

Continued

converted to a shelter, by Mexican immigration officials in Acuña; fearing deportation to Haiti more than anything. Their ultimate fate is yet unknown.

Their fears of deportation are tragically well-founded, as by the week before Thanksgiving (on 11/16)—and just days after the [U.S.](#) and [Canada](#) advised their citizens to [leave Haiti](#) for security reasons, ICE sent their [83rd Haiti deportation flight](#) in less than two months (since 9/19). More than 8,700+ Haitians have been recently expelled to well known and life threatening dangers.



Migrants crossed the Rio Grande between Texas and Mexico with supplies Thursday as they prepared to spend the night under the international bridge connecting Del Rio and Ciudad Acuña. Jordan Vonderhaar for The Texas Tribune

Actions:

- [Take Action here](#) to contact your legislators now to urge they Stop Expulsions of Haitians and Restore Asylum!
- Read about [this humane faith response](#) to Haitian migrants seeking care while on their migrant journeys from a Haitian priest now serving a historic church in San Juan, Puerto Rico; which historically also helped rescued freed slaves.
- Learn about historical [racial inequities](#) in border policies. Read also this [Amicus brief](#) filed by the Haitian Bridge Alliance in the case of *Al Otro Lado v. Chad Wolf*, to learn the background of disparate treatment of Haitian immigrants in U.S. history, and turnbacks of asylum seekers at the border.
- Support organizations that provide legal services to families navigating the U.S.'s broken asylum system, and Black immigrant led organizations such as [Haitian Bridge Alliance](#), [Cameroon American Council](#), [UndocuBlack](#), [BAJI](#), & [ACT](#).
- See [here](#) background from the October 8th hearing with former special envoy to Haiti, Daniel Foote before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, testifying of dangers for Haitian migrants returned to Haiti.

Prayer:

God of Hope, You made David's household great among the nations and relieved them from further oppression. Jesus taught us that every single person is a member of God's household, deserving a dignified life, in a place of peace and freedom. We thank you for the gifts of peace, shelter and a political democracy. Give us the courage to contest tyranny and the generosity to provide a safe, welcoming home for all of our siblings in your blessed family. Give us courage to confront our racism and its impacts upon our immigration policies. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Writer: Sister Mary Ellen Lacy-Daughters of Charity & Assistant: Gavin Sylvia-CWS



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope Beyond COVID

“Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth...but the Lord will arise upon you, and God’s glory will be seen upon you.” Isaiah 60: 1-6

Reflection: As we celebrate Christmas and near the end of the year, we pray for new opportunities for us to come together and begin to acknowledge the privileges that some of us have, and the way those privileges impact others. This Christmas, may we remember another refugee whose family traveled to escape persecution and who was denied a place of refuge time and time again. May we not perpetuate those same behaviors, but hold out hope that God’s light will live in our hearts and allow us to see past our prejudices and hate. Again this year, COVID has wrought challenges never faced before; perpetuating issues that already existed, and making the already vulnerable even more vulnerable. Especially, Black migrants face systemic [racism](#), [health disparities](#), and [bias](#).

The 4.2 million Black immigrants in the U.S. comprise 10% of the total Black population, and [largely live](#) in New York, Florida, Georgia, and DC, which are highly impacted by COVID-19. Yet also in many additional places—as in [Multnomah County](#), Oregon (as reported in May 2021), “Black, African American and African immigrant and refugee residents...remain at higher risk for severe COVID-19;” including being “80% more likely to be hospitalized compared to white cases.”



Black immigrant domestic workers surveyed have experienced, or live with someone who has experienced, COVID-19 symptoms.

WE DREAM IN BLACK DOMESTIC WORKER SURVEY

NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKER ALLIANCE

Even as Black immigrants had the highest unemployment even pre-COVID, many who are employed perpetually face vulnerability due to anti-black discrimination and high exposure risks on the job.

Black immigrants likewise face realities of deportation, in part because many work in essential occupations [“with public exposure](#) (that) leads to the increased likelihood of interacting with local police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents.” Once in contact with ICE, Black immigrants are detained in disproportionate numbers—and during the pandemic, we have seen how migrants in detention centers have suffered from outbreaks because of a lack of needed safety measures.

Christmas: Celebrating Christ's Arrival & Hope Beyond COVID

Continued

Question: *How will you continue to pay attention to COVID's impacts upon Black immigrant families, workers, and detained immigrants, and shine light upon how existing racial inequalities have deepened during COVID?*

Stories: (From the USC Dornsife Equity Research Institute report: "[COVID-19 and Black Immigrants](#): The Pandemics of Racism, Nativism, and Transnational Crises")



Photo: Matthew Ellis/NYT

- Mr. Ifill was an 81-year-old Black immigrant from Trinidad and Tobago. He lost a multi-week battle with COVID-19 in 2020. Mr. Ifill came to the U.S. in the 1970s and established a family-run business - Conrad's Famous Bakery - which served the Caribbean community in East Flatbush, Brooklyn for over 30 years.

- Hazel is a Jamaican immigrant in her 50s who contracted COVID-19 at the nursing home/rehabilitation center where she works as a nurse in April of 2020. After repeatedly being denied promotions at a company in New York, she took a career in nursing. Though she recovered from COVID-19 in June, she contracted it again on her job—and now has a lingering cough and ongoing blood clotting in her legs. Yet, Hazel keeps working to cover her mortgage, and also sends money back home to support family members in Jamaica.

Actions:

- [Learn more here](#) about undocumented essential workers in each state & by professions, who have helped serve the U.S. on the front lines throughout the pandemic, and [learn here](#) about Black immigrant domestic workers under COVID-19.
- See this [Black Asylum Toolkit](#) and scroll for a sample script to call the White House Switchboard at 202-456-1111 or your Legislators through the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 to urge opportunities for asylum be restored, and Title-42 be ended as it has disallowed persons from seeking asylum throughout the pandemic.
- Follow Detention Watch and [join](#) in their efforts for Coronavirus Immigration Detention Release.

Prayer: *“When the song of the angels is stilled, When the star in the sky is gone, When the kings and princes are home, When the shepherds are back with their flock, The work of Christmas begins: To find the lost, To heal the broken, To feed the hungry, To release the prisoner, To rebuild the nations, To bring peace among people, To make music in the heart. “[When the Song of the Angels is Stilled](#),” by Howard Thurman.*

Writer: Viviana Westbrook-CLINIC & Kaitlin Bell-CLINIC



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

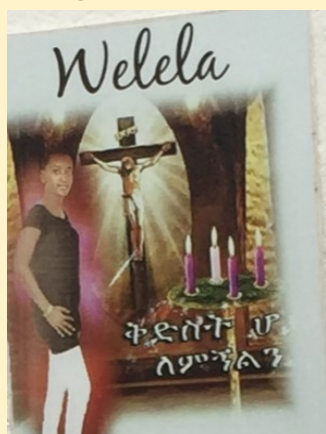
Holy Family Feast: Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out not knowing where he was to go. . . . So it was that there came forth from one human . . . descendants as numerous as stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.” Hebrews 11: 8, 12

Reflection: While the Feast of the Holy Family honors the family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, one suggested scripture passage from Hebrews widens the concept of “family” to include the whole human family. Although Paul’s letter teaches that we look toward everlasting life in God as our true common home, it can remind us that families first seek a home on Earth. “Home” denotes a place of security, welcome and trust. The Holy Family fled the reach of murderous Herod and found welcome in Egypt. In this century, the largest migration in history finds millions of families on the move to escape violence, famine, climate crisis, or today’s oppressive “Herods.”

Thousands of migrants from Libya and other African nations have drowned in the Aegean Sea. Many Cameroonians and Congolese are turned back from the U.S. southern border. Haitian TPS recipients are deported in large numbers. Racism is on full display. May we be reminded that we are all strangers on Earth, called by our faith to embrace all migrants seeking a safe home, notably our Black sisters and brothers.

Question: *How aware am I of realities of Black migrants from Haiti, Cameroon, Congo and elsewhere, why they’ve fled, and what obstacles they’ve met?*



Story: On the island of Lampedusa, located on Italy’s southern Sicilian coast and very near to Africa, is a graveyard erected for the remembrances of migrants who have made extraordinary journeys there in hopes of protection on Italy’s shores. Indeed, the large number of migrants who have made it to Lampedusa—or lost their lives while en route there—have led it to be known as “the door of Europe.”

One such migrant was the 18 year old Eritrean named Welela who fled first to seek protection in Libya. There locked in a warehouse, she awaited again to embark for a next destination.

(Continued)

Holy Family Feast: Linking with Global Journeys of Black Migrants

Continued

Chosen weeks later by ones who come regularly to the warehouse to recruit new slaves, she was again placed on a ship bound for Lampedusa, given rice, and forced to cook for those on board. On that boat, the propane cooking stove erupted, burning 60% of her body. With open wounds, the salt from the water and gases from the fuel combined to eat her skin like painful acids... until she, with 20 others, died on board.

Upon arrival, the [Mediterranean Hope](#) project of the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy worked in partnership with a local lawyer to gather her story from other migrants and tediously locate her brother previously resettled in Sweden. Eventually, a prayer ceremony was held, a video recording was sent to her brother, and a gravesite was purchased for her in the local cemetery—where now her picture still gives testimony to her life and hopes.



Image of a migrant ship off the shores of Lampedusa.

Other migrants are remembered in the same cemetery, marked when their names are unknown by crosses made of wood from wrecked boats. Creative ministries to respond to Black African and Caribbean migrant needs are desperately needed and gratefully located all around the world—in places like [Morocco](#), in the Catholic Relief Service's Action for the Protection and Integration of Migrants in [West Africa](#) (APIMA), in ministries with Haitians in [Tijuana](#), and elsewhere.

Actions:

- Contact your faith community to become familiar with their international migrant ministries, and learn how you can support Black migrant concerns globally.
- Help your faith community's global partners become aware of deportations happening by the U.S., and prepare to assist deportees being returned to their home countries such as the DRC, Cameroon, Haiti, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.
- [Continue to call for](#) a White House Task Force on Black Immigrants—and share this ask on social media!
- See these [faith statements](#) and this [faith letter](#) urging a halt to Haitian deportations.

Prayer:

Loving God, you who created all people in your image, uniting us a one human family, we pray for all Black migrants who have fled their homes seeking survival and safety. May they be welcomed as sisters and brothers in this country. May their courage and hardships be met not with silence, but with loving generosity and demands for justice. Amen.

Writer: Sister Marie Lucey-Franciscan Action Network &

Assistant: Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Disciples Refugee & Immigration Ministries



Lighting the Candles: Journeys with Black Migrants

Epiphany: Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

Scripture: *Arise, shine; your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has dawned upon you. Though darkness covers the earth...on you the Lord will dawn, and over you God's glory will be seen."* (Isaiah 60: 1-2)

Reflection: Epiphany celebrates the revelation to the whole world that the Christ, the word of God, light for the world, has been made flesh and dwells among us still. It is a light that no darkness can extinguish, not fear; not hatred; not even our original sin of racism. The feast of the Magi, the feast of the revelation of the light, reminds us of our call to be children of the light, to open our hearts to the love of God that is universal; to embrace the call to welcome God's children no matter their race, or creed or national origin. Christ's light shines in and through each and every one of us. As we celebrate this Epiphany let us pray for the grace to banish the darkness of systemic racism and welcome into our hearts and our communities those too often denied a place at our table.

Question: *What will it take to for us to welcome the light of Christ and banish the darkness of systemic racism?*



Story: Mitsu, born and raised in Haiti, came to the U.S. on a student visa to attend college. During the course of her studies, Haiti was hit with a 7.0-magnitude earthquake, which devastated the country. The U.S. government designated Haiti for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), an authorized immigration status that allows individuals to remain lawfully in the U.S. until it is safe to return. Mitsu now works as a physician assistant, allowing her to help financially support her parents back in Haiti.

Without permanent protections that lead to citizenship, Mitsu's TPS designation could expire, or if renewed is costly—leaving her with an uncertain future. Mitsu speaks to her parents frequently of conditions in Haiti and knows, "Haiti is nowhere near in a condition to support its current residents let alone receive citizens currently living abroad." Mitsu hopes that Congress will take action and find a long-term solution for Haitian TPS recipients. "We have done everything the right way yet, still find ourselves entangled within the immigration debate." (Mitsu's story from: [Justice for Immigrants.](#))

Epiphany: Shining a Path Towards a More Anti-Racist Future

Continued

Actions:

- Share from this [Defend Black Immigrants Toolkit](#) to urge lasting protections for Black immigrants and a halt to deportations.
- The House of Representatives over a year ago passed the Dream and Promise Act ([H.R. 6](#)), which would permanently protect TPS and Dream holders, but the Senate has failed to do the same. Urge your U.S. Senator to Support [S. 874](#), which, like the Dream Act and [H.R. 6](#), would provide critical permanent legal protection to DACA recipients, TPS recipients, and DED holders who are living in a state of uncertainty and fear.
- See this [Press Release](#) from a November 22 Interfaith Immigration Coalition White House event, urging justice for Black and other migrants, and a restoration of asylum.
- Pray and hold public faith actions to End Title 42, using this [Faith Asylum Vigil Toolkit](#), in your community.

Prayer:

You are the God who bears the brunt of the question, “Why didn’t you stay where you belong?” You are the God who feels our embarrassment when we hear, “Keep your distance foreigner, you with your different-colored skin and your strange-sounding speech, with your culture, food, religion, and clothing that are inferior to my own.” You are the God who walks alongside us; works alongside us; struggles for justice alongside us as we make our way in a land where we are not always welcome. Loving God, grace us with understanding, with Epiphany. Help us to remember that your light shines in us all. Hear our prayers for racial justice and necessary immigration reform. Light our way as we walk the path toward your beloved community. Amen. (Adapted from a [prayer](#) by Jon Pedigo)



Writer: Sister Ann Scholz-Leadership Conference of Women's Religious & Assistant: Madison Allman-CLINIC

*Advent Resources by the Interfaith Immigration Coalition's "Holy Days & Holidays" Team.
For more resources, go to: <https://bit.ly/IICReligiousResources>*