During this season of Lent as we walk with Jesus along his path towards the cross, we invite you into a deeper partnership with Jesus against injustices in our society. We invite you to also learn about the “#Home Is Here” campaign led by DACA leaders, and to CONNECT, SUPPORT, & STAND TOGETHER with the more than 700,000 DACAmmented neighbors who are awaiting the Supreme Court decision regarding DACA before the end of June.

Each devotion will share the words of DACA recipients about how their lives, communities, and congregations will be impacted if DACA protections are removed. Reflections will guide us through scriptures and themes to strengthen our readiness to face an uncertain future with courage, TOGETHER!

Eight DEVOTIONS for LENT

Feb. 26: Ash Wednesday, Joel 2:12-18, Return and Repent in Community
Mar. 1: 1st Sunday of Lent, Matthew 4:1-11, Avoiding Temptations to Misuse Power
Mar. 8: 2nd Sunday of Lent, Genesis 12:1-4, Journeying in Faith Toward Blessing
Mar. 15: 3rd Sunday of Lent, Exodus 17:3-7, Strengthening Our Faithfulness in God
Mar. 29: 5th Sunday of Lent, John 11:1-45, Standing with Jesus to Renew Life
Apr. 5: Palm Sunday, Matthew 26:14-27:66, Staying Strong When the Time Is At Hand

To learn more about “Home Is Here,” go to: https://homeishere.us/
Ash Wednesday, Joel 2:12-18: Return and Repent in Community

Even now, says the LORD, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the LORD, your God. Joel 2:12-13

Reflection: We know that we have wandered far from our God, forgetting our heritage and denying our brothers and sisters. We have divided God’s communion into separate camps. We call some “us” and others “them.” We have determined that some belong and others definitely do not. We know who is welcome and we know who we will too easily send away—separating families and devastating communities. The prophet Joel calls us to repent, to return to God with our whole heart, to turn away from fear and xenophobia, to reject the false narrative that divides us one from another. We pray, God forgive us and give us the strength we need on this day of public penance to rend our hearts that we might welcome those in need.

Story: "I think what scares me the most about losing my DACA status is not my own well-being, because I was raised by powerful women who were raised by other powerful women, and this country has activated my indigenous blood's survival nature. But, what scares me the most is all the people, whom I deeply love, who depend on me; including my 2-year-old daughter and the child that's on the way, and my church family who I have seen fight tirelessly for immigrants and migrants' rights. I think also about the undocumented youth who did not qualify for DACA, and have the hope that one day they, too, will have some type of relief. With the loss of DACA, more than just my status disappears. My entire community gets attacked.”

Rev. Cassandra Núñez

Prayer: God of abundant love, we beg forgiveness for the times we have failed to see you in the faces of asylum seekers in search of safety for their children, immigrants fleeing hunger and poverty, refugees fleeing violence, and DACA recipients chasing their dreams. We ask your pardon for the times we failed to offer shelter and protection to your people, Lord. God of infinite mercy, we pray to you who has reconciled us to yourself through the intercession of your own son. Open our arms, expand our hearts, and show us how to ease the burdens of those in need. Give us the courage to accompany all who seek justice in our land. AMEN.

Actions: Lent is a time to repent, an opportunity to turn from fear and embrace the Good News that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ called to build God’s beloved community. Commit to learning more about DACA recipients, the gift that they are and the obstacles they face—invoke these learnings calling your member of Congress, or donating to the DACA renewal fund.

• DACA recipients are integral parts of many of our local communities. Learn more at https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2019/09/12/474422/know-daca-recipients-state/.

• Learn more about DACA recipient’s SCOTUS battle https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/daca-heads-to-scotus-scenarios and

• Access legal resources https://cliniclegal.org/resources/humanitarian-relief/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals/daca-renewals-practice-advisory

• Visit https://unitedwedream.org/ and join the DACA-led homeishere.us campaign.

• Call your members of Congress (202-224-3121). Remind them this country is the only home many DACA recipients have ever known.

When you call, you might say something like: “Hi, my name is ___. DACA recipients are an important part of my life. As a person of faith, I am calling on [Representative’s Name] to support a permanent solution that protects DACA recipients, their families, and communities. I cannot support a proposal that does not also ensure the safety and protection of one whole united immigrant community. We must dig into the issues that cause many to uproot their lives to seek a better future--and receive them with compassion and welcome.”

#Faith4DACA

Facing the Future, Together!

Donate to the DACA Renewal Fund: https://secure.actblue.com/donate/renewalfund
Mar. 1: Lent Sunday 1, Matthew 4:1-11, Avoiding Temptations to Misuse Power

Then the devil took him up to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in their magnificence, and he said to him: “All these I shall give to you, if you will prostrate yourself and worship me.” At this Jesus said to him, “Get away, Satan! It is written: The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve.” Mt. 4:8-11

Reflection: Hoping to arouse greed for power in Jesus, and to trip Jesus up, the devil offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world, replete with their splendor—if only Jesus would but bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8-9). If Jesus was tempted in these ways, we will be too. Abuse of power and influence can lead to untold disillusionment and damage in Christ's body. Those who abuse their power leave a trail of destruction behind them. How do we know if leaders are abusing their power? How do we know if we are falling into the temptation of misusing power? Questions we might ask of ourselves and our leaders are: How do we treat those closest to us? How do we reach out to those mistreated by those in power? Are we bullies? Are we secretive? Are we servants or self-serving? Is it “my way or the highway”? Do I present one face to the public and another in private? Am I humble? In one of Henri Nouwen’s most insightful books, In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership, he observed, "What makes the temptation of power so seemingly irresistible? Maybe it is that power offers an easy substitute for the hard task of love. It seems easier to be God than to love God, easier to control people than to love people." Loving others requires that we die to ourselves. And not one of us likes that very much. We'd rather call the shots. But dying to ourselves is the Jesus way. (Adapted from Marlena Graves)

Story: “The ending of DACA would mean taking away the one thing that has provided a sense of stability after decades of waiting, praying and actively looking for solutions. It would mean disrupting the support system I represent for my family, friends, and community. It would mean letting fear win over protecting someone’s life and God-given dignity.” (anonymous, for security)

Prayer: Powerful and Loving God, you have blessed us with DACA leaders who arrived here as children and today seek a way to make their contribution to our common life. We pray for them now. We pray that they will continue to be allowed to work, study, and live in safety. We pray that those in authority may turn away from the demons of prejudice, fear and scarcity, and instead that they will set their hearts on acts of mercy. We pray that you will give us vision and inspire our concrete actions as we seek to realize our goal of liberty and justice for all. AMEN.

Actions: In this First week of Lent, let us open our hearts to the hard task of love. At the moment some neighbors who need our love are DACA recipients. Invite DACA recipients in your community to your house or congregation for an evening or moment of sharing at your church. Give DACA leaders the possibility to talk about what they feel and what it is like for them to wait now for the Supreme Court ruling. Build relationships, get to know them personally, and give DACA leaders the occasion to educate your community and you individually on what DACA is and what support is needed right now. Announce NOW to your community that the month of March is a month of action for DACA recipients. Add your name to this #Faith4DACA Sign On, which will be presented to decision makers during the month of action: http://bit.ly/Faith4DACA. Have as many members as possible sign it with you.

This Lent, CONNECT—SUPPORT—STAND IN SOLIDARITY with DACA recipients as the Supreme Court decision approaches! Devotions by IIC “Holy Days & Holidays” and DACA Team Partners

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**Reflection:** Migration is as old as the mothers and fathers of our faith, as old as the stories of Abraham and Sarah. Migration also involves loss, hope, and trust. This is probably why the experience of migration is central to faith. In this part of Abraham’s story, God is the one who calls Abram to migrate from his country, and from his people and family’s household to an unknown destination that God will show him. I imagine Abram and Sarai went through a grieving process as they left not only their families and loved ones, but also their physical connection to their land and their people. I also imagine Abram and Sarai felt some sadness thinking how their future children would not grow up near their family, their people, and on the land they were from. I admire the tremendous amount of trust in God and hope in the future God had promised that Abram and Sarai had. They followed God without knowing what the journey would entail or what their destination would be, even if throughout the rest of their story they had moments of doubt, impatience, and despair. Many immigrants today share how their faith is part of what kept them going in the arduous journey of migrating to a different land. Some even share how the coritos, psalms, and songs that their faith communities would sing over and over are the only things they can sing to themselves and their children during those nights of despair when their final destination seems so far away, if not impossible to reach. In this passage, God also tells Abram that all the peoples on earth will be blessed through him. Just like Abram had to migrate to be a blessing to families across the earth, immigrants today are a blessing to the families of the nations that welcome them. We all belong to a family, a community. God’s greatest desire is for the body of Christ to be one, to be united to truly flourish. A family, community and congregation without their DACA recipients will be fragmented and wounded. Pain, confusion, anxiety, uncertainty and much more will certainly be present if DACA recipients were to be separated from their bonds of belonging. If one member suffers, the whole body suffers.” Jennifer Hernández

**Prayer:** God, thank you for being our hope in times of uncertainty and despair. Thank you for being present with us in the times of loss. We know you are a God who experienced and experienced loss and mourning with us. Thank you for the times you use us to be a blessing and for the times you use those around us to bless us. Forgive us for the barriers we put up that prevent people from journeying in faith toward blessing. AMEN.

**Actions:** In the U.S., eligible voters are privileged to have votes count in the election of officials who represent chosen interests and values. This week, register eligible community members to vote at sites such as [https://www.rockthecvote.org/](https://www.rockthecvote.org/). Listen to this voice of a DACAmmented leader, who is NOT able to vote, encourage all who CAN to do so! Courageous leaders are needed at all seats of government in order for our nation’s immigration laws to change and honor the dignity of all persons. U.S. domestic and foreign policies have shaped immigrant lives in countless ways. The will to change these laws, including the DACA situation, has to come from every stage and level of government, from the head of government to the local elected official. Also, continue to help others sign on to this action to support DACAmmented neighbors: [http://bit.ly/Faith4DACA](http://bit.ly/Faith4DACA).

**Donate to the DACA Renewal Fund:** [https://secure.actblue.com/donate/renewalfund](https://secure.actblue.com/donate/renewalfund).
Mar. 15: Lent Sunday 3, Exodus 17:3-7, Strengthening Our Faithfulness in God

“And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Pass on before the people...and go. Behold, I will stand before you there...and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, that the people may drink.’” Exodus 17:5-6

Reflection: There is no shortage of parallels that can be drawn between scripture text and the realities faced on this journey of life. In fact, Exodus 17: 3-7 sees the people of Israel on a journey in transit to the promised land. Fatigued from the journey through the wilderness, they cry out to Moses for water; they cry out for nourishment and a reprieve from their thirst. Moses, in response to their cries, is ordered by God to “Go on ahead of the people...”, a call to action that was relevant then, and remains relevant now. In times of faltering faith, how are we, as people of faith, called to go ahead of our brethren in this day and age?

What does it look like to hear the cries of those around us and mobilize to act so that those in need around us “…may drink?” On this third Sunday of Lent, let us support the needs of DACA recipients in and around our communities in the ways they have chosen; by actively participating in utilizing our voice and agency to call for justice. Currently, 700,000+ DACA recipients lead lives suspended in limbo, crying out for the life-giving nourishment of justice in the face of threats to their security, family unity, and life itself. Let us “Go on ahead of the people...” in faithfulness, and rest assured that God is “…standing there in front of [us].”

Story: “To imagine DACA recipients being removed from this country is to imagine families that are incomplete, to see empty spaces that were once filled with such courageous, loving, kind, and hardworking individuals. To imagine DACA recipients being removed is to imagine a portion of the ‘American Dream’ being deleted from history. To imagine this is to imagine an incomplete puzzle piece, a puzzle piece with so much beauty and potential, simply ruined by the hands of those who refuse to see the bigger picture.” Valeria Bejar, Disciples of Christ

Prayer: Lord, give us the fortitude to “Go ahead of the people...” and stand in support of DACA recipients in a time such as this. As we seek to stand with DACA recipients, help us know that you have gone ahead of us to ensure that ALL your children are nourished and equipped with renewed vigor to continue to push for justice. AMEN.

Actions: This week is being marked around the U.S. as a “DACA Week of Action” to support DACA neighbors. Many DACA leaders will be traveling to the Supreme Court in Washington, DC to raise voices in partnership with various groups such as educators, DACA recipients’ family members, community leaders, and faith leaders! The signatures gathered by faith communities all across the country will be delivered.

In addition to the events held outside the Supreme Court, countless events will be organized by local and national secular and faith groups. If you plan on creating your own event, we’d love to hear about it! Register at http://bit.ly/registerfaith. If we know about your event ahead of time, we can be supportive and spread the word to help connect you with other faith leaders in your region. We can also utilize the photos, programs and news clippings and make sure important decision makers know about your work! Be sure also to make a final push for signatures TODAY on this sign on letter to be delivered this week: http://bit.ly/Faith4DACA.

The man blind from birth said, “The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Silo’am and wash’; so I went and washed and received my sight….though I was blind, now I see.” John 9:11, 25

Reflection: Sometimes the accounts of healing by Jesus are told in a few sentences, but this story of sight given to a man born blind, juxtaposed with the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees, is quite long. The healing occurs at the beginning of the narrative, but the man’s journey of recognition of who Jesus is and his increasing confidence to speak about his marvelous experience are gradual, culminating in his fearless admonition to the Pharisees: “This is what is so amazing, that you do now know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. . . . If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything.” One lesson for us today: once our eyes are opened to an injustice, ask God for courage to speak out.

Today, we are asked to raise our voices in support of Dreamers so that others may also see and act. Many of us know at least one DACA recipient among 700,000 Dreamers or more in this country: in our houses of worship, colleges and universities, neighborhoods, and workplaces. Offering public testimony of what we know about the contributions of DACA recipients is vital in these weeks leading up to the Supreme Court’s decision. Through Op-eds in local papers, make the public aware of what is at stake for DACA leaders and for our communities if the Supreme Court declares it was legal to end DACA. Once our eyes are opened to the plight of Dreamers, we are challenged to raise our voices to support them.

Story: “If DACA recipients were deported, we would lose many young leaders in our spaces. The power and resilience these leaders project to their communities will be lost. We would lose students, workers, family earners, and loved ones all because we have an administration who wants to hurt and get rid of immigrants in our country.” Luz Chavez-Gonzales, United We Dream

Prayer: God of love and compassion, you create every person in your image and want to unite us in one human family, enriching each other with our diversity. Open our eyes to the suffering of our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts to embrace young Dreamers, to be in solidarity with them as they await with apprehension the decision of the Supreme Court, and to speak out on their behalf and in solidarity together. AMEN.

Actions: Encourage DACA recipients to consult a lawyer and to renew their DACA work permits, because the government is required to process renewals while DACA is debated by the court. Because renewals cost $495, and may go up to $765 soon, help as many as possible by holding offerings and donating through the DACA Renewal Fund. The DACA Renewal fund helps DACA recipients access resources and directly supports local organizations.

- DACA Fundraising Tool-kit https://docs.google.com/document/d/1REyZ3pMTXqMsLzuYFKs0pAMCOgk5pH0V58MBXp8yis/edit

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HOME is here
Reflection: How deeply does God love you? How deeply does God love me? And how do we deeply love each other? We believe that each of us is created in the image of God—loved and beloved—called as God’s children. God becomes fully human through Jesus, and as Jesus weeps for Lazarus and for the community who is grieving Lazarus’ death, it is God who is weeping the loss of a child. The miracle of this story may not be in Lazarus’ resurrection, but in the love and care of the community. Martha and Mary are persistent in saving their brother. The community surrounds them in their hope and in their grief. Jesus is overwhelmed by his own love for Lazarus and by the love that seeps from the community.

As we move through this period of Lent, we must remember that our beloved community members may leave us. The Supreme Court will decide between now and the end of June the fate of the DACA program. These are beloved members of our community striving to make their mark and make their communities better. Their leadership has provided light in a path that often seems dark. Earlier in this passage, Jesus talks about how we must walk in the way of the light. It is our responsibility to lament, to confess, and to work for transformation that brings justice to these members and others under threat of immigration enforcement policies. It is our responsibility to stand as community members, and weep and then call out the powerful to make changes. The leaders of undocumented and DACAmented youth and young adults need our accompaniment, our voices, and our bodies to show love, support, and protection. This is how we deeply love each other. Leaders in the DACAmented community are dedicated to advocacy, collaboration, and problem solving. They are organized and prepared. This work is about being invited in to hear, support, and sustain them.

Story: “If I lose my DACA, I might not be able to send money to support my mother who depends on my earnings. Also my family will suffer in worrying about how I can be targeted for deportation.” Jung Woo Kim, NAKASEC

Prayer: God who never left your people alone, give us the courage needed in these moments. We pray for courage to face the tragedy in your life that resulted when your followers failed to protect you. We pray also for the courage to ensure allies will not back down from standing together with DACA recipients in fear of changing laws. In times of fears, may we never forget that You overcame even death to offer hope forever. AMEN.

Action: Write an Op-ed for your local newspaper, usually 300-700 words. For tips, go to theopedproject.org and click the Resources tab. For an effective opinion piece, begin with a brief story of a DACA recipient, you know or from these devotions. Know your audience; including some biographical information as a person of faith can lend credence to your opinion. Here are articles to consult as you write: ICE reopening long-closed deportation cases against Dreamers, Bob Ortega, CNN and The head of ICE says he will deport DREAMers if the Supreme Court ends DACA, Ian Millhiser, Vox. Encourage readers to visit homeishere.us to learn how impacted communities are organizing to show the Supreme Court that DACA recipients are #HereToStay.
Apr. 5: Palm Sunday, Mt. 26:14-27:66, Staying Strong When the Time Is At Hand

“I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’...But Peter declared, ‘Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.’...Then Peter said, ‘I do not know him’”.  Mt. 26:14-66

Reflection: St. Matthew depicts the Disciples’ painful betrayal, desertion and denial of our Lord. Jesus’ most trusted allies wouldn’t even stay awake to pray with Him. They wanted to stand by Jesus but self-concern won the day. And self-concern led to shame and weeping. In the novitiate, this gospel passage pained me greatly. Like Peter, I swore to Jesus and myself that I would always suffer with Him, stand up for Him and stay awake with Him. Like Peter, I soon learned that there is a difference between romantic promises and picking up Jesus’ cross when He arrives as someone whom the world fears or hates. Following Jesus calls for a selfless, counter intuitive love that we must cultivate. Every day, we must choose whether we want to be mere admirers of Jesus or committed followers who will sacrifice for the Kingdom. Ultimately, Peter and the Disciples realize they must withhold nothing to be followers of Jesus.

Where do we stand in our commitment to follow Jesus? When DACA was crucified by fear, our DACAmented brothers and sisters were betrayed, deserted and denied justice. Let us withhold nothing in our pursuit of justice for our immigrant family lest self-concern lead to shame and weeping. Unite the flock, amplify our alliance and embrace organized sacrifice so that DACA will be legislatively protected! This is how we follow Jesus.

Story: “Every day, I fear that the President’s reckless actions will strip away the lifeline that has been my DACA status. DACA bestowed upon me a life out of the shadows, and with that I finally felt like I had a future, for myself, my family, and the community of undocumented youth just like me.” (anonymous, for security)

Prayer: Dear God, We know that we build a better tomorrow by standing together as one body of Christ. We thank you for our DACAmented brothers and sisters who remain courageous beacons of a better United States of America. Send your Holy Spirit to our Supreme Court Justices so they might have the integrity and courage to provide a just, merciful ruling. Give us the courage to boldly stand with them and sacrifice all that is necessary to provide them justice and give them peace in this country, their home. We ask this in Jesus name. AMEN.

Actions: Be aware of signs and symptoms of depression and anxiety related to the fears associated with raids, deportation threats and an uncertain future. Consult these resources:

- Mental Health Tool-Kit: https://unitedwedream.org/2017/10/mental-health-toolkit/
- If you, or someone you know, is looking for local support, click on and enter your zip code into https://www.informedimmigrant.com/service-organization-search/ to find organizations that work with immigrants and provide healthcare and mental health services near you. Create a family preparedness plan to ensure you have some control in time of emergency see https://www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan.

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“Then Peter proceeded to speak and said, ‘In truth, I see that God shows no partiality. Rather, in every nation whoever fears him and acts uprightly is acceptable to him.’” (Acts 10:34-35)

**Reflection:** For many of the DACA recipients vulnerable to deportation if the Supreme Court upholds the Administration’s ending of the DACA program, it is difficult to feel accepted and hopeful this Easter. “After Trump’s decision on DACA, I was left feeling completely vulnerable,” said DACA recipient Emmanuel Ramos Barajas in a short video posted on “We are Mitú” YouTube channel. “The political system and immigration system are very overwhelming,” Emmanuel goes on to say. “It’s literally out of my control. So it’s very easy to feel powerless.” Consumed by fear, Emmanuel called his mother. “The more she spoke, the more peaceful I felt, because she reminded me: No matter how alone you feel, or how powerless, or how broken, or how tired, there’s always your community there to back you up….She told me, ‘Strong winds whip against us, but there is always, always, another way.’” The apostle Peter spoke powerfully in today’s Easter passage about how in God’s eyes, no population should ever receive special privilege above others. Instead, what matters to God is the faith and commitment brought forward from each person and nation. Being “Godlike” by showing no partiality to others pleases God. We can believe that demonstrating impartiality towards all neighbors in our time would also be an encouragement to Emmanuel and his mother.

**Story:** “I’m an undocumented college student and my fate will be decided by the Supreme Court. I came to the United States from Honduras at the age of six. My mother wanted a better, safer future for us and I am only here thanks to her. I graduated high school as class valedictorian and I was able to continue my passion for education because of DACA. However, with the end of DACA looming, my dreams are at risk. I do not know how much longer I can stay here in the United States. However, I am hopeful and committed to fighting for a Clean DREAM Act.” -Ilse Cruz

**Prayer:** Loving God, inspired by Jesus’ death and resurrection, may we be a source of hope and acceptance for Dreamers, demonstrating that modern tragedies such as the rejection of immigrants won’t have the final say. May we greet each stranger as neighbor and invite the discouraged to rekindle hope and to see God’s love and truth in people and places where we may have never looked before. AMEN.

**Actions:** NOW is the time to celebrate the resurrected life of Jesus as Christ. Consider making one way you celebrate by publicly demonstrating you are willing to “raise up” your own body to stand in solidarity with DACAmended leaders. ACT to support the justice and protection of the vulnerable that Jesus lived and was willing to die for! Throughout this Eastertide, hold conversations in your faith community about how you will prepare to help protect the lives of your neighbors.

PREPARE your congregation/family/community to be ready to support DACA recipients before the Supreme Court decision is announced. Ask yourself and your community:

- **WHO** among us will be ready to respond rapidly?
- **WHAT** might I/we write now to have ready to send to the media and speak about publicly in OpEds and LTEs?
- **WHERE** will you plan to go immediately following the decision? Plan to join in action(s) and support families.
- **WILL** you be willing to speak publicly (and perhaps even engage in the tradition of civil disobedience to protect against the deportation of 700,000 DACA neighbors?"
Thanks to all who DACA leaders who shared their statements named in devotions, and to Home Is Here partners & the IIC DACA Team which provided guidance.

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