



EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF NH

June 19, 2018

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

Our God has little use for national boundaries or borders, especially when they are used to condone hatred, cruelty, or to limit God's mercy and love. How do we know this? Because the Bible tells us so. Clearly. This year we are reading the Gospel of Mark in our Sunday cycle of readings. There, in chapter 7, we find the compelling and disturbing story of how Jesus himself thought he would limit mercy based on ethnic and religious identity. And then even Jesus reversed himself. Once when he traveled across the border to the region of Tyre and Sidon, a "foreign" woman pleaded for him to exorcise a demon from her daughter. At first Jesus refused, citing that he needed to take care of his own first. Whether he was serious about this claim or simply testing the faith of the unnamed Syro-Phoenician woman is a matter for debate. I rather like the interpretation that he actually changed his mind at the woman's urgent and heartfelt plea to God's mercy and love, regardless of borders. As St. Augustine once said about the interpretation of the Bible, if your interpretation of scripture is a choice between wider hope, faith and love on the one hand, or leads you, on the other hand, to limit God's mercy, choose the former. This is what Jesus chose. As a result he healed the girl, immediately, indicating that God's love and compassion knows no bounds. *And the girl was returned to her mother.*

God is free to decide to be compassionate at any time God wants. And so are our elected officials.

I invite you, therefore, to join me in contacting your elected congressional deputation in urging the President to show more compassion at our southern border, to stop the brutal practice of separating children from their parents, immediately. Below are links to the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations that can greatly facilitate your reaching out to our Senators and Representative:

Yours Faithfully in the God of Love and Justice,

+Rob

The Rt. Rev. A. Robert Hirschfeld
Bishop

Please Search any of the below resources online—an electronic version of this communication will be posted to CGS resources later this week.

- » [Presiding Bishop Curry's statement.](#)
- » [Rebecca Blachly's statement.](#)

Information on Monthly Prayer Vigil for Immigrant Justice, [Click here](#)

To easily contact your congregational delegation, use this link:

- » [Take action through the Episcopal Public Policy Network \(EPPN\)](#)

From the Episcopal Public Policy Network:

Below find a host of actions you can take on family separation, resources for educating yourself and others on immigration processes, and statements from church leaders on this issue.

We must take action now!

Raise Awareness:

Join the Vigil for Family Unity

This Thursday, June 21st, on Capitol Hill in D.C., we will host a vigil 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., on the longest day of the year, in recognition of the fact that any day children are separated from their parents is too long. This will be a space for prayer, reflection, education and action on immigration issues and asylum.

Ways to participate:

1. Join the Virtual Vigil from 1:00pm to 2:00pm EDT. You can submit prayers via email or social media to be read at the vigil.
2. Engage on Social Media with #KeepFamiliesTogether
3. Share educational resources and the action alert from @TheEPPN
4. Start a vigil of your own in your parish

Take Action

Write Congress to stop family separation, defend access to asylum! If you've already reached out, get in touch with 5 friends NOW and encourage them to speak out too.

Be an Informed Advocate

Learn more about immigration issues through these educational resources from the Office of Government Relations:

1. WATCH: ["Understanding Our Immigration System"](#)
2. WATCH: ["Loving Your Neighbor: Faithful Action on Immigration" webinar](#)
3. READ: ["Asylum and the Caravan"](#) from May 2, 2018
4. EXPLORE: Our [immigration resource page](#) for more in-depth information on a variety of immigration topics