

ANNUAL 40-HOUR FAST

WELCOMING THE STRANGER

Prophetic Voices for Immigrant Rights

Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS
800 Troy-Schenectady Road
Latham, NY 12110-2455

"The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."

(Levit. 19:33-34)

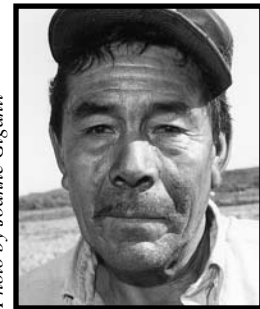


Photo by Joanne Giganti

Join us for the 13th Annual 40-Hour Fast...

A time of prayer and reflection, sacrifice and action for change.

Tuesday, March 4, 2008 at 8 pm
until Thursday, March 6 at noon

WELCOMING THE STRANGER Prophetic Voices for Immigrant Rights



In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger (cf Matthew 25:35), for "what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me." (Matthew 25:40)

The Qur'an tells us that we should "serve God...and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing]." (4:36)

The Hindu scripture Taitiriya Upanishad tells us: "The guest is a representative of God." (1.11.2)



Praying for moral solutions

Non Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 295
Albany, NY

Components of just, workable immigration legislation

- ✓ An overhaul of U.S. trade policies such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), which have led to the impoverishment of working people in Mexico and other countries. These policies have created a desperate need to leave one's country and migrate to the U.S. in search of survival wages.
 - ✓ Adequate funding and enforcement of all U.S. labor laws, including wage and hour laws, health and safety laws and protection of workers' right to freely join a union. Addressing these issues for U.S.-born workers is part of what it means to create a welcoming climate for immigrants.
 - ✓ A program that values families and favors the unification of family members.
 - ✓ A pathway to earned citizenship, building on the values we all share.
- Based on the Summary and Users Guide to *For You Were Once a Stranger: Immigration in the U.S. Through the Lens of Faith* (2007). From Interfaith Worker Justice.

Why fast?

"Fasting is a transforming act – it has the moral power to bring about political change." - Bishop Howard Hubbard, Co-Chair of the Labor-Religion Coalition.

Why 40 hours?

The number 40 has special significance in both religious and labor traditions.

The Hebrew Scriptures record that Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on Mount Sinai when receiving the Law from God; the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years; the great flood in the story of Noah lasted 40 days and 40 nights.

For Christians, the 40 days of Lent are a time of sacrifice, prayer and action rooted in Jesus' 40 days of fasting in the desert.

The US labor movement, after many years of sacrifice and struggle, gained a 40-hour work-week for most workers.

How do I fast?

During the 40 hours you are encouraged not to eat solid food: for one or more meals, between sunrise and sunset on March 5, or for the entire 40 hours.

During our fast, what do we do?

The Labor-Religion Coalition's 40 Hour FAST is both individual and communal, private and public. While participants experience the hunger pains brought on by going without solid food for one or more meals, they are asked to consider the sacrifice of immigrants to our state who frequently risk their lives to be able to feed their families. Fasters hunger for an America that promotes opportunity for all.

Religious and labor history demonstrates that fasting can make a moral statement about unjust laws or situations that need change. Cesar Chavez, a leader in the struggle for farmworker justice, said, "When you sacrifice, you force others to sacrifice. It's an extremely powerful weapon."

Communities of labor and religion can play an essential role in supporting immigrant workers by speaking out for fair and humane standards for all who toil.



What else can we do?

◆ Pray daily that immigrants are welcomed in our communities as sisters and brothers and that all workers receive fair wages and are treated with dignity.

◆ If you know of any worker not being paid overtime or the NYS minimum wage, contact the NYS Department of Labor at 1-800-447-3992. New Yorkers, regardless of immigration status, must earn at least of \$7.15 per hour (including tips).

◆ Contact the Fiscal Policy Institute (518/ 786-3156) to receive a copy of *Working For a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy* or download a copy at <http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/immigration2007.html>

◆ Learn about the rights of workers to overtime wages, prevailing wage rates for certain public building projects and other programs and services available to all without regard to immigration status. For information or to schedule a presentation, contact the Bureau of Immigrant Workers' Rights in the NYS Dept. of Labor at 518/ 457-6162 (upstate) or 212/ 775-3665 (downstate).

◆ Visit www.NewSanctuaryMovement.org to learn what some religious congregations are doing to welcome the stranger.

◆ Support statewide policies that give farmworkers and domestic workers the rights and protections from which they are now excluded.

◆ Read the *Unity Blueprint for Immigration Reform*, available (along with other resources) at www.AFLCIO.org/issues/civilrights/immigration. It provides specific legislative proposals aimed at achieving a workable, just and fair immigration system.

Please consult the list of Labor-Religion Coalition contacts on the reverse side to learn more about FAST activities in your area.



Photo by Marie Triller

At the US/Mexican border fence near El Paso during a LRC delegation.



Photo by CSEA VOICE

A family childcare provider speaks out on behalf of her diverse workforce



Brochure by Linda Gluck Graphic Design