

## A Liturgy for Farm Workers Awareness Sunday

March 29, 2015

Lita Claytor Swindle

### Call to Worship

Oh, Lord of the harvest, your children go into the fields today.

**Bless your children as they go.**

As the day breaks, they arrive in the buses and trucks, and in the old cars and on foot.

**They are glad to have the work.**

**Bless them as they work.**

The fields are yellow and red and green with squash and tomatoes and beans.

**Bless them as they labor.**

The day is long and hot and bone-muscle tiring.

**Bless them as they gather and cull and sort and carry.**

The day goes from morning 'til night. The buses come for them.

**Bless them as they rest!**

### Call to Confession (*read by two women*)

**I worked so hard in the office today, it's almost 6 o'clock and I am late.**

I worked so hard in the fields today, clothes to wash, supper to fix, house to clean.

**I had to pick up dinner from the store for the kids.**

Can we eat tomatoes for supper?

**The maid was sick and the house is a mess.**

Will the maestro come for the rent? The rats come in through the hole in the floor.

Where can I wash our clothes?

Who will keep the kids while I go to clean?

How will I pay the doctor bill?

How will I pay for the medicine?

What will I do when the immigration man comes?

Where will I hide? Will they take the kids?

**I had to drive the car pool two days this week—school pick up—soccer practice—play dates, and they just sit there, texting, playing computer games on their phones!**

I cover my face and hands from the sun and dirt and from his eyes.

Don't call attention—don't make waves!

Don't talk too much—don't fall down—don't rest!

**My husband plays golf on his days off, never talks to me.**

Where is my husband? My mother? My father? My older son and daughter?

The mission was there to give us bags as we came out of the fields today—thank you Lord, Gracias Dios! We can eat tonight, rice and beans, sodas and water!

### Prayer of Confession

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we give so little and the need is so great,

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we don't see, in our world, the invisible, the disenfranchised, the desperate, the forgotten.

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we shut ourselves up in our houses and forget the homeless.

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we overeat and throw out good food and forget the hungry.

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we rejoice in the abundance of fruits and vegetables in the grocery stores and forget the sweat and hard labor of the workers who gather and bring it to our tables.

**Lord forgive us...**

...when we consume and buy more, and complain that it is not enough.

**Lord forgive us! Amen**

**Assurance of Pardon**

“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

*(2 Chronicles 7:14)*

**Prayer for Illumination**

Lord of all knowledge and understanding, you give us minds to study and comprehend; we say we do not know and do not understand. You communicate with us through television news; we think that applies to other people. You tell us through radio and newspapers; we feel that is far away and someone else's problem. You give our pastors, Sunday school teachers, and Bible study leaders words of wisdom; we congratulate ourselves that we have such great pastors, teachers and leaders—then we forget. Now, this day, burden our heart to listen and understand and care and act. Your people are hurting, Lord. Show us, again, how you want us to be the answer to their prayers and this time. Give us hearts to listen! Amen.

**Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon**

- **Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29**
- **John 4:31-35**

**Affirmation of Faith**

*(written by Rev. José Luis Casal)*

**I believe in Almighty God, who guided the people in exile and in the exodus, the God of Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon, the God of foreigners and immigrants.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean, who was born away from his people and his home, who fled his country with his parents when his life was in danger, and returning to his own country suffered the oppression of the tyrant Pontius Pilate—the servant of a foreign power—who then was persecuted, beaten and finally tortured, accused and condemned to death unjustly. But on the third day, this scorned Jesus rose from the dead, not as a foreigner, but to offer us citizenship in heaven.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us, who speaks all languages, lives in all countries, and reunites all races.**

**I believe that the Church is the secure home for the foreigner and for all believers who constitute it, who speak the same language and have the same purpose.**

**I believe that the communion of the saints begins when we accept the diversity of the saints.**

**I believe in the forgiveness which makes us all equal and in the reconciliation which identifies us more than does race, language or nationality.**

**I believe that in the resurrection, God will unite us as one people in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time.**

**Beyond this world, I believe in life eternal in which no one will be an immigrant, but all will be citizens of God's kingdom, which will never end. Amen**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

As God has blessed us with blessings without measure, we give back a portion of that blessing. This offering represents our time, strength, and abilities. All comes from our God.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

O God, you have given us so much, give us one thing more: a grateful heart! We will use this offering, which represents a part of the lives of this congregation, to preach Jesus to the world around us, to ease the lives of those who suffer, and to sing for justice in unjust and dangerous times. Amen.

### **Charge**

Now, as God has blessed you, be thankful for the food on your table, remembering the hands and feet and backs that gathered it, stand by your sisters and brothers who labor in the fields, march for a "penny a pound" until that justice is done, support fair and equitable immigration laws, and dare to speak and stand and vote for justice in our land!

In the name of Jesus, the friend of the downtrodden, the poor, the disenfranchised, the farm workers, stand and march and speak for justice! Amen!

### **Benediction**

Thank God—God is so good. God's love never quits!

(Psalm 118:29)