

Your People Shall Be My People
Immigration
Proper 26

Overview of Topic

Focus Text: Ruth 1:1-18

“Ruth said, ‘Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die-- there will I be buried.’”

Scripture Commentary by Rev. Joan M. Maruskin, *The Bible as the Ultimate Immigration Handbook*

The migration story is key to biblical ancestry. In the book of Ruth, one family is the focal point. It begins with Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, who take Moabite wives, having to leave Judah and move to Moab because of a famine. Eventually all the men die, and the women are left alone.

Pastoral Reflection by Rev. Alice Kirkman Kunka, Director, Corazon

Not only did the law give foreigners a way to survive with some measure of dignity, it commanded the people of Israel to treat aliens living in their midst as some of their own “native-born,” admonishing them to “love them as yourself,” and reminding them that they, too, were once foreigners in Egypt (Leviticus 19:34). Exodus 22:21-22 echoes this reminder of the time when all of Israel were aliens in Egypt, forbidding any mistreatment or oppression of aliens. Even though Ruth was not a native-born “citizen” of this adopted land, she was to be afforded certain protections under the law that ensured her survival.

Personal Vignette by from “Hands of Harvest, Hearts of Justice,” a North Carolina farmworker curriculum produced by the NC Council of Churches

In my life I have known many stories of people fighting daily in order to move ahead in search of opportunities to survive and fulfill their needs and those of their families—people like me and others trying to achieve hopes and dreams. To forge a better future with strength, work, and dedication even though it means the tears of an anguished mother facing the painful situation of knowing that her children are far away, watching time pass, praying that she will receive good news from her children.

Key Fact

Immigrants come to this country today for the same reasons people have come for the last 400 years – economic, religious and political freedom. Many have fled civil war in their countries or economic conditions so desperate that they risk everything to come to the U.S.