

I received a letter recently from the Catholic Worker House of Hospitality in Houston, Texas, Casa Juan Diego. I've gotten their newspaper in the mail for years, although I am not entirely sure why, and am familiar with the good work they do, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the poor, welcoming the stranger – all things Jesus told us to do, and all things that the Catholic Worker movement, founded by Dorothy Day, has done with grace and humility for decades.

But the Catholic Workers in Texas are now faced with a new Texas law that allows any police officer to arrest and begin deportation proceedings on anyone who cannot show proof of citizenship. The volunteers at the Houston Catholic Worker are afraid. They know that the Texas Attorney General is pursuing Annunciation house, a House of Hospitality in El Paso, attempting to shut them down for feeding, clothing and housing immigrants by trying to portray these acts of mercy as “human smuggling.” So, the Catholic Workers in Houston, and I imaging all of Texas are waiting. They weren't even asking for money in their letter, they were just asking for help as they wait to see what will become of their ministry. They are waiting for the attorney general's officials to show up at their door, to try to shut them down. They are waiting to be arrested for doing what Jesus told us to do.

And I am waiting for the Bishops of the US Catholic church to loudly lift their voices in protest. I am waiting for our religious leaders to firmly place themselves, and our whole church, on the side of the oppressed, to speak out boldly in favor of doing what Jesus told us to do: feed the hungry, cloth the naked, welcome the stranger.

Sometimes it's hard to wait. Holy Saturday is the day we wait.

A neighbor of mine had a baby last month, and I spoke with her two weeks before her due date when the doctor had told her it could be "any day now." And I continued to see her, almost daily, for the next two weeks as she waited for this birth, and even for several days after her due date, I would see her in her yard, still pregnant, still waiting. Each time I saw her I felt a pang of sympathy - I remembered from my own pregnancies how hard it is to wait.

We all know what it is like to wait. We wait for babies to be born, and for children to grow up. We wait in doctor's offices to be seen and wait by the phone for the results from that last blood test. We wait for our young ones to return home at night or the end of the semester, and we wait by bedsides, or in the dim hallways of the ICU for those we love to breathe their last. And I think about our fellow Catholics, engaging in the works of mercy, waiting to be arrested in

Texas. Sometimes we wait in fear, sometimes in pain, sometimes in joyful anticipation, but almost always we wait impatiently.

Holy Saturday is the day we wait for the return of Christ, the return of light to our community. We await our most important liturgy, the Easter Vigil. We await the joy of Easter. Holy Saturday is liminal time – in between time – in between our ritual commemoration of Jesus’ death, and our grand announcement tonight at the Vigil of his return in triumph over death and all that opposes God. This waiting, that we recognize in ritual and prayer each Triduum, is what gives meaning to all the times in our lives when we wait. And even while we wait impatiently for an end to refugees being reviled, for an end to religious leaders being timid, for an end to the to the racism and misogyny that are woven into the warp and weft of our society, we wait in faith.

We believe that the end of all waiting is God, and we profess belief in a God who waits for us. This Holy Saturday, as we rush through all of our last minutes preparations for our Easter celebrations, let us hold in mind the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Therefore, the LORD waits to be gracious to you;

therefore, God will rise up to show mercy to you.

For the Lord is a God of justice;

blessed are all those who wait for the Lord. (Isaiah 30:18).