



We face a unique challenge to make room for God. In recent months, we have seen the escalation of strong sentiments against immigrants. These sentiments seem to be mounting in the U.S. as well.

How might our various Christian practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving relate to the complex reality of immigration, especially in the face of increasing hostility toward immigrants? In his first Encyclical Letter, *God is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI offers clarity:

'...if in my life I fail completely to heed others, solely out of a desire to be devout and to perform my 'religious duties,' then my relationship with God will also grow arid. It becomes merely 'proper' but loveless. Only my readiness to encounter my neighbor and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbor can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me...Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment... (Deus Caritas Est no. 18).'

To the question: 'Who is my neighbor?' Jesus' answer is clear. As his disciples, we are called to attend to the last, littlest, lowest and least in society and in the Church. Join me in making room for the stranger in our midst, praying for the courage and strength to offer our spiritual and pastoral ministry to all who come to us, offering our prayer and support for the ones in our midst who, like Jesus, have no place to rest their heads (Matthew 8:20).

Cardinal Roger Mahony
Archbishop of Los Angeles

Excerpts from Cardinal Mahony's Lenten message, "Making Room," (Sojourners Magazine -- 3/8/06)

The Los Angeles Times reported: "In his most forceful comments to date, Mahony said he would instruct his priests to defy legislation - if approved by Congress - that would require churches and other social organizations to ask immigrants for legal documentation before providing assistance and penalize them if they refuse to do so." Cardinal Mahony has been commended for his faithfulness to the gospel and courageous commitment to justice for "the strangers in our midst" - those who Jesus commands us to see as our neighbors.

Next Meeting: Thursday, 5/25/06; 7:30-9:30, Room 227

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