



Every year, as many as two million migrants work the fields of the United States and at least half of them are undocumented. All of these workers are on a journey - whether crop to crop and state to state or from thousands of miles and another country away. The work is hard, the wages low, the conditions dismal, and the road perilous. This Harvest of Justice asks you to accompany, in spirit, the farmworker on his or her journey.

THE JOURNEY TO JUSTICE

For many farmworkers, the journey begins in our neighbor countries to the south. International Trade Agreements have accelerated immigration by increasing the devastating poverty faced by communities in Latin America. For example, since NAFTA took effect in 1993, U.S. corn and other grains have flooded the Mexican market, bankrupting nearly one million Mexican farmers.

For decades, the U.S. agriculture industry has counted on, and courted, the cheapest available labor in order to earn the greatest possible profit for the growers, the processors, the grocery chains, and the shareholders. As the flow of cheap labor from our southern neighbors increases, they have become the most vulnerable and easily exploited labor pool for the multi-billion dollar food industry.

The farmworker's journey holds hope - hope to make enough money to send back home so that children don't starve and homesteads aren't sold. But the journey too often involves little compassion and less justice.



... the labor of farmworkers' hands is in fact before us every day ...

While the issue of immigration is very much in the public eye these days, it is important to remember that what we are really talking about are particular men, women, and children whose individual plights, especially for those working in our agricultural industry, are not in the public eye, but are instead almost invisible.

However, the labor of farmworkers' hands is in fact before us every day - in the orange juice we drink for breakfast, the taco we eat at lunch, and the salad we have for dinner. Join the National Farm Worker Ministry as we acknowledge and celebrate the vital contributions to our economy and to our everyday lives made by those who travel north to work our fields. May we become a people who welcome them with God's compassion and justice.

NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY

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THE NATIONAL FARM WORKER MINISTRY

supports farmworkers who are organizing for equality and justice.
It educates people of faith and their institutions about the conditions facing farmworkers in this country, and activates them to stand with farmworkers in their struggle for justice.

CONTACT NFWM
for action updates, boycott news and Union Label Food Products to purchase

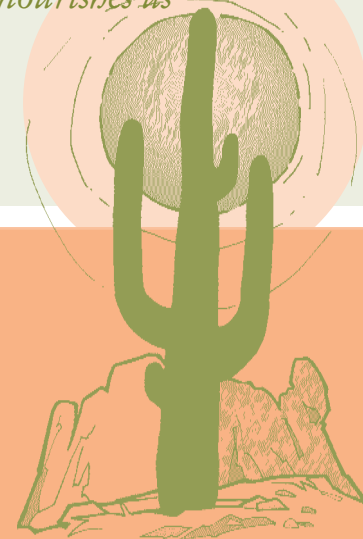


Prayers & Text: NFWM Staff
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HARVEST OF JUSTICE

Table Prayers

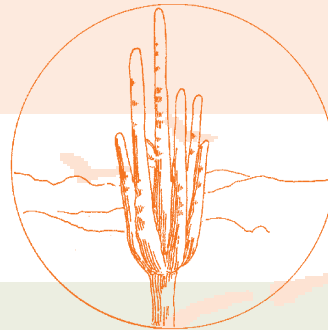
honoring those whose labor nourishes us



• PRAYERS FOR MANY TABLES •

breakfast • dinner • lunch • picnic • meeting

“Every time we sit at a table at night or in the morning to enjoy the fruits and grains and vegetables from our good earth, REMEMBER that they come from the work of men and women and children who have been exploited for generations” Cesar Chavez



• LEAVING HOME •

“In Chiapas, you can’t make enough to eat. That’s why I’m here – to make a better life for my family.”

A Mexican farmer crouches under the meager shade of a mesquite in the Sonoran Desert, parched, his feet blistered. The farmer looks north and hopes for a brighter future, fears the dangers of the road ahead, grieves what he has left behind.

A thousand miles behind him, his wife and children stand in their doorway. She hopes for a brighter future, fears what lies ahead, grieves for all that has left her.

God of all compassion and perfect mercy, be with those who make the journey north for work and with those they leave behind.

• CROSSING THE BORDER •

“States have the right to control their borders, but not an absolute right. The right to feed yourself and your family comes first. These people aren’t breaking the law, the law is breaking them.”

Dear God, every day, men, women, and children are making the perilous journey north across the U.S. border - a border established by people, not by you.

We pray, God, for your help in tearing down the borders we have built around our own hearts, that we may see you in each person, and that we may learn to love and welcome each of your children as members of one people, one world, one God.



• TRAVELING TO THE FIELDS •

In May 2004, a tractor-trailor was abandoned in south Texas with 100 men, women, and children from Mexico and other Latin American countries locked in the back. Nineteen people died.

Why, O God, do our neighbors have to risk their lives to come and work in our yards, our hotels, our fields? Why, O God, do we ask the most vulnerable to endure the hardship and abuses of fieldwork which we will not do ourselves? Why, O God, do we allow the pursuit of profits to outweigh the pursuit of fairness? O God, have mercy on us.

• IN THE FIELDS •

“The other day when we were in Mass, I couldn’t feel my face because it was cracked and that comes from the fertilizers. The fertilizer is alive. It is alive in the soil! You pick it up and you start with a rash. . . .”

God of health and wholeness, we pray for those who toil in conditions that result in disease, limiting their ability to be whole. We pray for those who create the conditions and for those who allow the conditions to continue.

May farmworkers feel your healing touch on their bodies, minds, and spirits. We pray in the name of the great Physician and Healer.

• WORKING WITHOUT FEAR •

“After toiling for more than two decades to put food on my table and the tables of American families, I feel I deserve some sort of consideration for my labor, such as the right to legally live and work here. If I haven’t earned it for myself, I hope some of my children will have it. I myself no longer count.”

Holy God, source of righteousness and hope, where is your justice if we, your followers, do not bring it to bear against the wrongs you lay before us? As we sit at table each meal, cause us to remember the farmworkers who daily endure hardship and exploitation so that they can feed their families and so that we are fed. Spur us to act on their behalf, the very people we all but shut out of our society. Help us to be your instruments of justice in the world.

