



There is Enough for All – Even During a Pandemic

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In the midst of lockdowns and toilet paper shortages, many have turned toward the myth of scarcity, that there is not enough to go around. The human survival instinct, combined with the influence of consumerism and capitalism, create a breeding ground for fear, division, exclusion, and hate.

Our sacred scriptures and faith tradition draw a vivid contrast, reminding us that if we share, there will be enough for all, and if we extend ourselves in faith, God will provide. When there are just five loaves and two fish, many can be fed on little.

As we prepare for the beginning of Lent, often observed with spiritual sacrifices, we recognize that any act of sacrifice should not be for sacrifice alone but for transformation and solidarity with others. The current once-in-a-century pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on marginalized communities. Many have lost their jobs, can no longer pay rent, or find little access to health care. Workers who are often paid the least – farm workers, meat packers, grocery clerks, sanitation workers, whose work is finally recognized as essential – also face greater risk of exposure to the deadly virus. The inequality is overwhelming: while 29 million people and 12 million children in the U.S. face hunger, [billionaires made 3.9 trillion dollars](#), and data shows Black, Latinos and Asians dying at [a much higher rate](#).

There is no easy solution, but there is something we can do. The Biden administration has set forth a plan that pushes the U.S. forward in this struggle to end the pandemic, and recognizes the benefits we all enjoy from the hard work of those now deemed essential. Congress can pass [this plan that includes](#) addressing the hunger crisis, renewing unemployment benefits, equitable distribution of stimulus checks, restoring worker protections, funding for vaccine roll-out, and raising the minimum wage to fifteen dollars per hour.

As an advocate for immigrants' rights, I recognize the limitations of the Biden plan – and the new possibilities. The workers now lauded as vital during this pandemic?

Undocumented and under-documented people make up over 5 million essential workers, over one million of those are “Dreamers” and DACA-eligible people. The anti-immigrant rhetoric and the separation of families over the last four years has been heartbreaking. In 2019 at a meatpacking facility, Mississippi saw the biggest workplace raid ever in a single state. One employee, Maria Domingo-Garcia, was a mother to a 4-month old, 3-year-old and 11-year-old, all children who are U.S. Citizens. She was detained and ripped away from her children, even though she was still breastfeeding the youngest. This is the way so many essential workers have been treated. Although Maria had been in the country for 11 years with no criminal record and paying taxes, she was still deported and torn from her children. People like Maria should be part of this stimulus package. Congress should include all essential workers as part of the stimulus and Covid-19 relief efforts. People like Maria who were unjustly deported should be reunited with her family on humanitarian visas. Creating a pathway to citizenship would be a boon for the economy, increasing tax revenue, decreasing deficits, and adding billions of dollars to the GDP.

In times of fear and crisis, it is easy to look inward and forget about our neighbors in need, but as people of faith, we know that there is enough for all. We can and should work to build equitable systems during this crisis when the most marginalized are at their greatest need.

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