

On the occasion of  
Constitution and Citizenship Day  
September 17, 2017



### Prayer for an Inclusive Citizenship

Dear God, when you brought us into existence, you did not name us as citizens of a nation but invited us all to be citizens of one creation.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Creator Spirit, in your wisdom, you revealed that we are called to be sojourners in this world – to live as if no land were our home as we pass through this vale of tears. Bring us a sense of the humility about who our neighbor truly is.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Wonder-Counselor, grant us the vision to see a world where imaginary political boundaries are not used to exclude and marginalize.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Let us remember that the United States of America owes a special debt to the people it failed to recognize as full citizens for so long – indigenous peoples, slaves, people of color, and women, among others. Help our hearts to be converted so that we reject exclusion and instead work to create a more just and inclusive society.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Let us consider reparations we may owe both as a nation and oftentimes as members of churches that participated in proselytizing endeavors that worked to colonize the minds, cultures, and lands of those they met and dealt with brutally.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Let us appreciate the gifts of the Spirit. The gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues show us that intercultural appreciation is truly God's will for us, so let us embrace a multilingual society where we learn to communicate with one another and appreciate linguistic differences.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

Help us all to be mindful of how we can be better neighbors to others and work to make this land more welcoming to the poor, the excluded, the migrant, the refugee, the imprisoned, and all those we sometimes forget or who are ignored by those in power. Help us to create a new world in which each of us works together to know and embrace the stranger in our midst.

*R: Help us build a world more justly loving.*

God of all, remind us that this world is our shared home. Help us to become co-creators in a New Earth that respects all of creation. Teach us to nourish relationships with all our neighbors around this planet that is so small in the vastness of Your reach, so that together we can work toward the perfection of this common home.

*R: Amen.*

## Actions Toward a More Inclusive Citizenship

Prayer is a wonderful gift to the world but it works well to combine it with concrete action as well. Here are some recommendations of actions you might take:

- Write, call, or meet with your members of Congress to tell them that you welcome your neighbors – and that you do so as people of faith. You can mention the DREAM Act, to be sure, but this legislation is only designed to help one group of immigrants, not to change the conversation about who is welcome in the United States.
- Use or adapt one or more of the lines from the prayer above to include in the petitions read at your church or parish.
- Educate yourself and others about the different ways of excluding people as citizens. Remember that many people “with papers” are not allowed to become citizens. Take, for example, migrants from Central America, Haiti, and other countries who have come to the United States under Temporary Protected Status (TPS), which offers a work visa but no path to permanent residency or citizenship.
- Get out of your comfort zone. Go to a prayer service or liturgy in another language, even if you don’t know the language at all.
- Become a volunteer ESL tutor. Get training and make a commitment to stay there on a regular basis for an extended period of time.
- Don’t let anyone get away with xenophobic comments. This means that if your aunt or cousin or next-door neighbor starts saying something that demeans another human being, you tell them that you don’t agree with them and that you welcome everyone in your circle.

If you have ideas for any sort of action related to promoting a more inclusive sense of citizenship, write us at [cso@quixote.org](mailto:cso@quixote.org). We are happy to collaborate and to provide any support we can to make this world more justly loving for all our neighbors.

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