

“Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe.” (Gen. 12:10)

We hear admonishments throughout the Hebrew and Christian scriptures to treat aliens in our midst as we would be treated. People of spirit are called to be hospitable, to treat the other as a guest. This comes from centuries of peoples moving across the earth and at some point, living as the alien in a strange land.

This country has a rich tradition as a “melting pot.” We all bring an array of cultures, languages and traditions, and celebrate their inclusion in the patchwork that is our rich heritage. The Statue of Liberty declares “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.” These words show a country founded and grown to strength on a course of hospitality.

Yet at the highest levels of our government, and among those who set policy, we are told to fear the outsider. We are told that undocumented aliens commit crimes, take our jobs, that they impose hardships on our educational and healthcare systems. And U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) coldly calls its program of institutionalized intolerance “Return to Sender.”

Today churches and religious organizations join with the city of San Francisco claiming that our diversity is our strength and that the best policy for a vibrant safe and secure nation is one of hospitality. We join Mayor Newsom and San Francisco Immigrant Rights Administrator Sheila Chung Hagen in reaffirming our commitment to provide hospitality to the alien in our midst, and to respect the dignity of every human being, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads “+ Marc Handley Andrus”.

The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus
Bishop