Opinion

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Loyola Marymount University student and "Dreamer" Maria Carolina Gomez joins a rally in support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program outside the Edward Roybal Federal Building in Los Angeles on Sept. 1, 2017. (AP/Damian Dovarganes)



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I feel guilty that I have not written a column on "Dreamers," those children who were brought illegally into the United States by their parents. The reason I find it difficult to write such a column is that for me the whole idea of deporting Dreamers is so mean and unjust that I find it incomprehensible that anyone would want to do it.

No matter what you think of people coming into the country illegally, one can hardly blame children brought by their parents. And once these children have spent their formative years here, the idea of sending them back to a country they do not remember, with a language they may not know, is spiteful.

It is especially appalling as we conclude the Christmas season to hear Christians denounce amnesty for Dreamers. Did they listen to the Gospels at all during Christmas? Do they not understand that Jesus, Mary and Joseph were refugees fleeing for their lives to take sanctuary in Egypt? Do they not realize that Baby Jesus was a Dreamer in Egypt?

The Jesus of Matthew’s Gospel was simply repeating the experience of the Jewish people who also took refuge in Egypt. The Egyptians, like many Americans today, exploited these immigrants, treating them like slaves and cheating them of their wages.

The Bible is filled with admonitions about treating strangers and aliens justly.

“You shall not oppress or afflict a resident alien, for you were once aliens residing in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:20).

“So you too should love the resident alien, for that is what you were in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).

“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34).

Where are the biblical fundamentalists who say that American law should be based on the Bible? Christians, especially those who believe that Scripture should be the foundation of American law, should be leading the charge in support of Dreamers, refugees and other immigrants.

Instead, what we see is too many Christians siding with a president who holds Dreamers hostage for ransom — $18 billion to pay for his wall along the border with Mexico. Legislation to protect Dreamers is urgently needed; a wall is not. Yet, Donald Trump insists that he will not sign a bill protecting Dreamers unless it includes his wall.

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Every white person in this country has ancestors who came here as refugees or immigrants. Many were fleeing political or religious persecution, but millions more came because America provided economic opportunities for themselves and their families. Today’s refugees and immigrants are coming for exactly the same reasons. But now the drawbridge is being pulled up by those whose immigrant ancestors arrived earlier.

Shame!

Some Christian churches have declared themselves sanctuary churches, following an ancient tradition when secular authorities could not invade a church to get an accused person. While churches cannot guarantee sanctuary today, these churches have symbolically placed themselves with the undocumented and not only

accompany them when arrested but also financially support their legal defense.

It is time to stop playing politics and start acting like God-fearing people. Otherwise we will hear this on Judgment Day: “Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was … a stranger and you gave me no welcome” (Matthew 25).

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