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## An immigrant's fervent prayer

By Anushka Anastasia Solomon

**"Life is a song we must sing with our days**

**"A poem with meaning more than words can say."**

— Michael Card from *"The Poem of Your Life"*



Writing former first lady Laura Bush yielded a smiling portrait of her in a rust-colored suit. Behind her were orange roses, and the photo was signed: "With best wishes, Laura Bush." The orange envelope arrived from The White House. First Class. Do Not Bend. The roses were out of focus. The accompanying note impersonal and formal. Like those roses, my eyes blurred.

I wrote letters, one to the former first lady and one to former President George Bush. Denver immigration lawyers told us that if we could get an invitation to the White House, they could get us green cards. It sounded like a plan.

One of the prayer counselors at a Christian prayer line recommended I write President Bush. "He is a good, Christian man. I don't trust these lawyers. I have been photographed with the president; I know he is a good Christian man," she reiterated. It was 3 in the morning. I was up, praying. That too sounded like a plan. Dec. 19, 2007, his reply arrived from the White House: The president sent his best wishes.

Christmas 2008, after 10 years, we got our green cards. An American employer who does not profess any faith in Jesus kept his word. Speaking of it now, an American Christian we met at the Evergreen post office asked, "Isn't that how it should be? Should not everyone do it legally?" she asked. And further, "How do you feel about the Mexicans coming in illegally?" she prodded my husband and I, oblivious to the interest of everyone else in the line.

We looked at her silently. We are not going to go there, my husband replied prudently.

"Well, it depends on how you wish that question to be answered," I countered with characteristic passion, reflecting on one of our American-born lawyer's recommendations that we "go illegal" until the political environment changed because she expected a bill to pass that would give

amnesty to illegal immigrants.

My answer will step on political toes, I told my questioner, but as a Christian, I know what the Bible says. Leviticus 19:34: "The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt."

As one Catholic bishop said, "The immigrants are not breaking the law; the law is breaking the immigrants." I continued, considering our path of legal immigration, realizing as I spoke that I was losing her interest.

It brought to mind Mark 10:18: "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered, "No one is good — except God alone."

I understand. It is easy to forget in America that Jesus was born in the Middle East. It is easy to forget in America that the Father of all nations is One who has a heart for the alien, the oppressed, the poor, the lonely, the afflicted and the needy. It is easy to forget that Jesus' true politics is love and those of us who celebrate Easter are called to love our enemies, those who despitely use and persecute us.



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It is easy to forget in America the neighbors in our own backyard: eating, drinking and breathing the same air, needing the same kind of love and care, sharing the same dreams, worshipping even the same God.

It is easy to forget in America that indeed some religious holidays are about Christ, who signs His love letter to us not with his best wishes, but His precious blood. Perhaps this Easter, we will forget our politics and our poverty and remember Him.

Anushka Anastasia Solomon is an Evergreen poet ([www.atthewindow.us](http://www.atthewindow.us)) and American-in-waiting.

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