



What Evil Have They Done?

Rachel Hackenberg
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“You told me this person was causing trouble among the community: bringing harm, inciting violence, and disrupting security. But I cannot find evidence of such guilt; this person has done nothing to deserve death.” (Luke 23:14-15, rewritten)

Mariee Juárez, age 20 months. March 2019.

Jakelin Caal Maquin, age 7. December 2018.

Felipe Gomez Alonzo, age 8. December 2018.

Mergensana Amar, age 40. November 2018.

Huy Chi Tran, age 47. June 2018.

Roxana Hernández, age 33. May 2018.

Kamyar Samimi, age 64. December 2017.

Jeancarlo Jimenez-Joseph, age 27. May 2017.

Osmar Epifanio Gonzalez-Gadba, age 32. March 2017.

Moises Tino-Lopez, age 23. September 2016.

Jorge Alberto Umana-Martinez, age 47. October 2014.

Elsa Guadalupe-Gonzales, age 24. April 2013.

The names of those who have died while in ICE custody since its founding in 2003—these listed and many more—have been reported by news organizations, advocacy groups, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) itself. Inadequate medical care and dehumanizing conditions are too frequently a

death sentence for those who are detained. Those who don't die are terrorized, threatened, separated from loved ones, and often abused in mind-body-spirit.

While we prepare our palms for praise on this coming Palm Sunday, our nation's immigration policies continue to perpetuate Good Friday's injustice, horror, and violent death. "What is the basis for such a death sentence?" Pilate asked. Is the action of migrating between countries so great an evil that we feel justified in our government's use of the death sentence?

Do we imagine that these deaths will save us?

This Holy Week, may our palms not only be waved in church with joy but also waved in the street with loud protest. In faith, let us no longer demand death but insist upon life, rally for fair and just laws, and extend compassion for those who have survived too many Good Fridays.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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