This week, I felt more connected to the work at the immigration office, opening myself up to the goodness and purpose that La Luz brings to Catholic Charities. I want to focus this reflection on *perseverance*.

Throughout my time here, I've met many refugees, asylees, and immigrants whose perseverance continually amazes me—perseverance in the face of the conflicts they fled, in societies that accept them only on the condition that they change, and in the midst of constant attacks on their communities. I've touched on this before, but as I've watched things shift daily, I feel compelled to reflect on it more deeply. Every single day, their endurance humbles me.

Recently, our office has been working with a woman from Myanmar for nearly two years. Her country is enduring an ethnic cleansing targeting the Burmese people, and she has been seeking refuge in the United States. She's been studying English and learning about American culture, preparing with hope and excitement for her upcoming immigration interview—scheduled for next Tuesday. It was to be her chance to finally leave behind the fear and suffering she faces and begin life in a country where she wouldn't be persecuted for her ethnicity.

Then, just yesterday, the President announced an indefinite ban on immigration from Myanmar and several other countries—many of which our office serves—calling them "dangerous" and claiming their migration threatens American lives. Her interview is now cancelled, postponed indefinitely until the ban is lifted.

This story struck me deeply. Most of my experience in the office has been filled with good news—helping clients complete citizenship applications or renew visas, work that, while technical, opens doors to stability and hope. But hearing this reminded me of all the unseen, untold stories—of people whose hopes are crushed by fear-driven rhetoric and political decisions made without regard for human dignity.

These are people who came here with hope, only to be swept into debates that question whether their lives matter as much as those whose families arrived generations ago. Perseverance defines the people we serve—and that same perseverance must define us as well. We owe it to them to stand beside them so that their resilience is not just a response to injustice, but a path toward lasting safety and peace.

I reject the idea that we are powerless in the face of xenophobia and hatred. Our faith calls us to more—to act, to accompany, and to love, even when it is difficult. I pray that God continues to give us the strength and compassion to persevere, to keep serving with hope, and to never grow weary in doing good for those who simply wish to live and thrive in peace.