

# Compassion

Faith doing justice in the Central and Southern Province...and beyond

January 2018

## BORDER IMMERSION TRIPS TO SACRED HEART, EL PASO

In the coming year, the Jesuit Social Research Institute and the Ignatian Solidarity Network, together with the UCS Province, will be piloting border immersion trips to our parish in El Paso. The first trip is scheduled for March 14-18, 2017, and will be for parish groups and other adults. We will cross the border into Juarez, so passports are necessary for those who want to make the trip across the border. The March trip will be led by Frs. Rafael Garcia and Eddie Gros. More details, including a tentative schedule and cost, will be available soon. We are hoping for teams of two or three people from each parish so that they can work together to bring what they learn on the trip back to their parish communities. Contact Mary Baudouin – [mbaudouin@jesuits.org](mailto:mbaudouin@jesuits.org) if you are interested in joining a trip.

## NATIONAL MIGRATION WEEK: JANUARY 7-14

For nearly a half century, the Catholic Church in the United States has celebrated National Migration Week, an opportunity for the Church to reflect on the circumstances confronting immigrants, refugees, children, and human trafficking survivors. This year's theme, "Many Journeys, One Family," draws attention to the fact that all of our families have a migration story: some recent and others in the distant past. Regardless of where we are and where we came from, we remain part of the human family and are called to live in solidarity with one another. Check out the Justice for Immigrants website for different resources, including the National Migration Week toolkit with bulletin inserts, homily suggestions, community engagement ideas and other resources to help your community celebrate.

## A TENDER AND TRAGIC MIGRATION STORY FROM SACRED HEART PARISH EL PASO

from Fr. Rafael Garcia, SJ

In May, Casa Vides, one of the Annunciation House hospitality homes for migrants and refugees close to our parish, received a young mother in her fifth month of pregnancy who had fled El Salvador. I had the opportu-



nity to meet her and interview her for the house's survey regarding the journey and the situation in the detention centers. Our young mother was a college student, working toward a career. In the midst of her studies, she was threatened by drug gangs and had to flee on short notice. After traveling through Mexico,

she sought asylum at the border. She was processed and detained for three months, during which time she was moved to six different detention centers in New Mexico and West Texas.

While in detention, she had complications with her pregnancy and was taken to the hospital once. At the detention centers she often had to sleep on the floor. Through the intervention of Annunciation House, and due to her medical situation, she was released to Casa Vides. She was welcomed by the staff and community and received loving care and hospitality; this would be her home for seven months.

In September, her baby boy was born. He was welcomed by all! Her asylum case was still being evaluated and she had legal representation. About a month ago, she received notice of deportation, but ICE gave her an opportunity for a month's visit with her undocumented mother who is here in the U.S. and whom she had not seen in 13 years. Upon return from the visit, she soon learned that her deportation would be in four days.

In recent times, she expressed interest in having her baby boy baptized, and we at Sacred Heart were ready to assist her, but she later decided it was best to wait to return to El Salvador and do the baptism with family. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent, she came with her baby and a group of staff and residents from Casa Vides to have her baby "presented" at the 8 a.m. Mass. We did a presentation ritual and anointed her son in preparation for future baptism. In the accompanying

photo, she is signing her son with the Sign of the Cross. The next day at 4:30 am, they were at the ICE offices for deportation. Both are returning to family, but to a violent situation. She fled El Salvador due to fear for her life. We pray for the two of them, for their safety and well-being as they take up a new Cross and chapter in life.

These types of deportations are occurring regularly.

## JANUARY IS POVERTY AWARENESS MONTH - MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE NOW

During Poverty Awareness Month, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and the Catholic community in the United States will take up Pope Francis' challenge to live in solidarity with the poor. An [online](#) and [print calendar](#) (also [en Español](#)) includes daily ways to learn about poverty, to get inspired by how communities are responding, and to take action with others. In addition to the calendar are [longer daily reflections](#) (also [en Español](#)). You can sign up to [receive the daily reflections by email](#). A comprehensive [liturgical aid](#) for Sunday, Jan. 28 is also available for incorporating themes and prayers into the liturgy.

## DEATH PENALTY ACTION NEEDED THIS MONTH

THREE executions are scheduled in the states of Texas and Alabama for this month, January 2018. The Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) is urging people to send e-letters to the Texas State Board of Parole and Pardons and Alabama Governor Kay Ivey to ask for clemency for the three men. Click on their names below, and you will be taken directly to a letter that you can personalize (if you wish) and send.

### Upcoming Executions:

- [Anthony Shore \(TX\) - January 18](#)
- [Vernon Madison \(AL\) - January 25](#)
- [William Rayford \(TX\) - January 30](#)

The Catholic Mobilizing Network is also encouraging us to pray for those to be executed, their families, their victims and the victim's families. [Click here to download CMN's new prayer vigil for an execution.](#)



*Members of the IVC Denver volunteers, director Erin Benson, and chaplain Fr. Jim Goeke, SJ*

## SOCIAL GRANTS HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH: IVC DENVER

Each month we are highlighting one of the recipients of the UCS Province social grants, which are given out by the UCS Province in the spring of each year. This month we give a big shout out to the newly formed Ignatian Volunteer Corps (IVC) in Denver. Last September 2016, a group of parishioners from St. Ignatius Loyola Parish and Fr. Tom Cwik began exploring how they could start this program that provides men and women aged 50 and over opportunities to serve the poor and develop their own spirituality. In just a little over a year, the new Denver IVC chapter is up and running under the leadership of part-time director Erin Benson. Ten Ignatian volunteers have now been placed in six placement sites in the Denver area, including Boys Hope Girls Hope; Mile High Youth Corps; St. Francis Center; SAME (So All May Eat) Café; the African Community Center, and *La Escuela de Guadalupe*. Erin is also nurturing the applications of six potential volunteers. Volunteers meet monthly with spiritual reflectors and as a group for community-building and reflection on their service.