

# Strangers No Longer Newsletter

January 2020



**FACEBOOK PAGE HAS  
LAUNCHED !**

**“LIKE” “FOLLOW” “SHARE”**

In a continuing effort to improve communication between our Circles of Support and to attract new interest from the community, we have started a Facebook page! Please check it out! Click on “Like,” “Follow” and “Share” in order to stay up to date with us!

[https://www.facebook.com/Strangers-No-Longer-107610897446238/?eid=ARCvf\\_mWsXlhfScvDeu7F3T8aU3-2OyxiU3VkDtGQwLOGruf3BQqbe5G-gFdE7fWoMu0bQQwbZw-DVVb](https://www.facebook.com/Strangers-No-Longer-107610897446238/?eid=ARCvf_mWsXlhfScvDeu7F3T8aU3-2OyxiU3VkDtGQwLOGruf3BQqbe5G-gFdE7fWoMu0bQQwbZw-DVVb)



**COME ON FEB. 8 10:00 am - MEETING  
WITH YOUTH LEADERS ACROSS BORDERS**

Strangers No Longer is taking the lead on a week-long educational tour that will bring four young people from Central America and Mexico to SE Michigan. The youth leaders will share their stories in high schools, universities, parishes, house meetings and communities. Youth leaders from Mexico who have experienced the pain of deportation will share their stories– and how they have come to defend the rights of deported people in Mexico. From El Salvador, we will be joined by

creative young activists who are using urban art and music to provide alternatives to gangs and protect at-risk children and youth in one of San Salvador’s most marginalized neighborhoods. To schedule a visit to your house meeting or community, call Bill O'Brien, 313-549-0421.

The tour will build connections between young people in Michigan and their peers from Mexico and Central America, seeking to promote understanding and solidarity across borders. By engaging on a personal level, participants will deepen their understanding of the factors that are causing so many people to leave their home countries, and the pain that is experienced by children, youth, and families who are caught the ever-more aggressive immigration enforcement systems that are causing families to live in fear, and that have resulted in many people being returned to Mexico or Central America.

**10:00 AM, Saturday, Feb. 8 at St. James in Ferndale (Our Mother of Perpetual Help), 241 Pearson. Registration not necessary – but helpful at:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsJ06HaQSYhFrLS4poh4mZg0On4puQOZB0Z6oUBb3HAv\\_g4LA/viewform?usp=pp\\_url](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfsJ06HaQSYhFrLS4poh4mZg0On4puQOZB0Z6oUBb3HAv_g4LA/viewform?usp=pp_url)

An event for YOUNG ADULTS will be held 5:30 PM, Sunday, Feb. 9 at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic Church, 438 St. Antoine. Followed by 7:30 PM Mass. Info: Mara Rutten, 313-961-8077 x 204 or [parishlife@ssppjesuit.org](mailto:parishlife@ssppjesuit.org) .

## **COME ON FEB. 8 11:00 am - MICHIGAN DRIVER'S LICENSE CAMPAIGN KICKOFF**

At the February 8th meeting, you will also learn about The Strangers No Longer MI driver's license task force which is kicking off a campaign in support of the Drive SAFE bills (Senate bills 631, 632 and House bills 5192, 5193.) These bills will allow drivers licenses and state ID cards for all Michigan residents—including undocumented immigrants. Right now, the bills are stuck in committees with no scheduled debates

The right to get a driver's license for the undocumented without proof of citizenship or permanent residency was allowed in Michigan until 2008. Since then, immigrants without a form of



identification haven't been able to do simple things like buy prescription medicine, enroll their children in programs that require parents' ID, or even get a library card. **The Drive SAFE bills are supported by 32 organizations across the state including the Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Catholic Conference.**

Here is a quote from Tom Hickson, Michigan Catholic Conference Vice President for Public Policy, September 20, 2019:

*“Transportation is vital to nearly every aspect of life, and to have good transportation access, you need a driver’s license. The inability to obtain a license makes life’s most basic functions extremely difficult. Most of us take for granted life’s routine tasks, such as driving to work, going to a doctor’s appointment, taking a child to school, going to church, or picking up groceries...”*

*All of these situations require a driver’s license. Prohibiting individuals from gaining access to a driver’s license robs them not only of their human dignity but it also hurts the community... For these reasons, the Michigan Catholic Conference is proud to stand here today to discuss this issue and looks forward to a robust discussion on this important human dignity issue in the Michigan Legislature”*

SNL Circles from St. Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor and Our Mother of Perpetual Help Parish in Ferndale and Oak Park are leading the task force to get these bills passed.

**What can you do? With your Circle, meet with the state Senator and Representative from your district to communicate your support for these bills. Be ready to discuss the benefits of these bills including: improved public safety, agriculture labor benefits, additional revenue for Michigan in license fees, etc.**

We have an information packet regarding the bills and their benefits to help you prepare for the meetings. We can also come to your next Circle meeting to present this topic in more detail.

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**GET INVOLVED – WE NEED YOU!!**

**SCHEDULE OF FAMILIES IN FLIGHT HOLY HOUR SERVICES**

Join us for a Holy hour of prayer, readings and music to honor the migrant families in flight from poverty and oppression all over the world.

**Blessed Sacrament Cathedral**

9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI

10am - 11am

Saturdays on February 1, March 7, May 2, June 6

**St. Michael’s Catholic Church**

40501 Hayes Rd, Sterling Heights, MI 48313

Tuesday February 25th

7pm - 8pm

**Gesu Catholic Church**

17180 Oak Dr, Detroit, MI 48221

Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>

5:45 pm – 6:45 pm

**St. Andre Bessette Parish**

4250 W Jefferson Ave, Ecorse, MI 48229

Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>

7 pm – 8 pm

**Christ the Good Shepherd**

1540 Riverbank St, Lincoln Park, MI 48146

Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm – 7:30 pm

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**Closing of the Prayer and Fasting campaign, focusing on the Body of Christ being crucified today in the lives of migrating families:**

**Blessed Sacrament Cathedral**

9844 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI

Saturday, April 4th

10am - 11am

**START A CIRCLE AT YOUR PARISH OR CONGREGATION**

A quick meeting with a few of your fellow parishioners or congregants can clarify first steps, guest presenters, etc. Some new parishes are now in the beginning or discerning stage: St. Ambrose, Christ Our Light, Nativity, St. Charles Borromeo, Our Lady of Sorrows, St. Patrick (Brighton). Call 313-549-0421 - Bill O’Brien.



**NORTH OAKLAND VICARIATE CIRCLES PRESENTS – AUGUSTINIAN PRIEST FROM UN**

“Race, Migration, Climate.” North Oakland Vicariate presents Fr. **Robert Dueweke OSA**, originally from Detroit, at St. Mary of the Hills on **Thursday, January 30, 7:00 PM** at **Holy Family Regional School**. (The school is located on the same campus as the Church.) He will share his vast experience of ministry in Peru, Chicago, and now at the United Nations representing the Augustinians.

This presentation is guaranteed to get us thinking about the intersection of race, migration, and climate. The vicariate is invited as well as parishes with a **Strangers No Longer** ministry. For more information contact Sr. Grace Keane, OSF at St. Mary’s at [gracek@smoth.org](mailto:gracek@smoth.org) 248-243-0258 or Sam Jennings at St. Andrew at [samj@standrewchurch.org](mailto:samj@standrewchurch.org) 248 651-7486 Ext. 115. To register: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090c4fa5ac2ba20-snlpresentation>

## **JOIN HUMAN RIGHTS/ENVIRONMENT DELEGATION TO HONDURAS**

SNL leader Sr. Rosemary Abate, HVM, shares this (MAY 27) request which came through the Leadership Conference of Women Religious:



*Dear friends of Fr. Melo and the human and environmentalist defenders of Honduras,*

***Please help us find delegates to join the May 27 to June 3rd Delegation to Honduras to support the freedom of the Guapinol 8.***

*This morning another caravan left San Pedro Sula to the United States. They will face the “New Wall” of military at the Guatemala-Mexico border. But the conditions they are escaping are much worse: just in the first two weeks of January 2020, 15 women have been assassinated; 380 femicides in 2019, more than one per day.*

*The government of Juan Orlando responded with **more repression** after his brother was found guilty of narcotraffic charges in a New York court.*

*After four months, Our Guapinol-8 continues in jail for defending the Guapinol River. They are asking for our solidarity and accompaniment. We are appealing to you to help us find delegates to join the May 27 to June 3<sup>rd</sup> delegation to Honduras.*

Apply at <http://www.share-elsalvador.org/delegation-may-honduras-2020.html>.

**SAVE THE DATE:** Fr. Melo, SJ, has received numerous death threats for his human rights efforts in Honduras. He will be speaking at the U of D Mercy on April 2: Jesuit Martyrs Fundraising Dinner, 6:30 PM. Keynote: Ismael Moreno Coto, SJ (“Padre Melo”). Contact: Prof. Gail Presbey at 313-993-1124 or [presbegm@udmercy.edu](mailto:presbegm@udmercy.edu).



## **UPDATE ON CESAR CUELLAR AND HIS FAMILY**

Cesar Cuellar and his wife and son arrived in the Detroit area in 2017. The SNL Circle at Gesu Catholic Church has helped the family since they arrived. We checked in with Cesar to see how he and his family are doing. They are expecting their second child in a few weeks.

### **Where are you and your family living?**

We are living in Detroit, two blocks from the GESU church.

### **Are you working?**

Yes, I work as an IT coordinator at the GESU school and church. This is because I have a work permit that was issued to me thanks to the asylum process that we have opened for our family since 2017.

**How do you and your family like being here?**

We are definitely happy despite the great changes, but taking into account that in El Salvador you do not live, survive, leave that feeling behind and all the stress that generates the possibility of being a victim of gang violence is liberating. But also the fact of migrating and leaving everything behind is not easy, especially when people do not have family or any type of permit that allows you to develop normally.

**How are people helping you?**

As I have always said, Gesu and the Circle of Support that exists in this community have helped us in many aspects of life, initially with housing, then with food and things for our house. But above all that what changed our lives and brought us joy was that they made us feel part of their community, they made us feel welcome, since they quickly ceased to be "the circle of support", to become our friends of Gesu.

**Are you in touch with people back home?**

Yes, the whole family of my wife Carmen is in El Salvador. I for my part, my whole family has lived in the United States for many years.

**When will your new baby be born?**

Thank God, we had the blessing of being able to have our son Cedric at home without any complications, and with Camilo, our new baby is in the same process, he already has 37 weeks with what is soon to be born in the next 3 weeks, although Carmen thinks it will be in the next 10 days.

**Is there anything you would like to add?**

Personally as a migrant, there is nothing that costs more to overcome than the rejection and injustice of some people who, thanks to the media traditions of communication, think that we have come to this country to violate or abuse it, but in most cases this is not the case, we are migrants who want a better place to raise our children, a place to live with

dignity, where they can grow up in an environment free of social, economic or environmental violence, but above all live far from corruption that causes so much damage to society and that is the great sickness in Central America, especially in the northern triangle (Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador). Gangs are the result of all the abuse committed by corrupt politicians who have looted our countries to enrich themselves, and as you know in the eyes of the international community, the apparent problem of our countries is gangs, when these are simply the result of the corruption that has never been prosecuted and judged as it deserves, and as long as this does not change, people will not stop fleeing from poor conditions in every way, social, economic and currently environmental.

**REFLECTIONS ON FAMILIES IN FLIGHT**  
**HOLY HOUR AT MOST HOLY TRINITY**

On Saturday, January 11, Strangers No Longer began its Campaign for Prayer and Fasting for Families in Flight. The theme of Families in Flight coincided with the Feast of the Epiphany and the Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt. The goal of these Holy Hours is to call attention to the plight of those seeking refuge in our country, to educate people about the reality of the immigration crisis, and to challenge members of the Circles of Support to pray and fast in support of migrants and refugees.

This first Holy Hour was a very moving and multicultural experience, involving Las Guadalupanas (A Women's Society from Most Holy Trinity and St. Anne's parishes dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe); and Los Matachines, a group of families dedicated to re-enacting traditional Aztec dance and music to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe.



The Holy Hour remembered the seven children who died while in U.S. Detention Centers in 2019. Following an incense bearer, Shirlene Smith of Gesu Parish, seven members of Las Guadalupanas carried photographs of the children. Amelia Matta read each child's name, age and country of origin in English and Spanish as the photos were placed on the altar. Los Matachines completed the opening ceremony with a spectacular performance involving dance and drums.

To highlight the reality of the immigration experience, Poet Michael McLauchlan read a an original poem on the theme of immigration, which was followed by a heart-rending testimony by Luz Ramos, who walked and hitchhiked 1,200 miles with her two children to escape violence and persecution in Guatemala. Irma Landin-Obregon skillfully provided the English translation of her testimony.

Following a reading of the Gospel of Matthew, Sister Nina Rodriguez of St. Anne's Parish, offered a moving reflection, reminding us that Jesus was an immigrant and calling the congregation to work on behalf of migrants and refugees, and to advocate for change in our nation's Immigration Policies. Her reflection concluded with a procession of children who carried roses to the altar, which were then placed at Our Lady of Guadalupe's Shrine.

We gratefully acknowledge the support and participation of Msgr. Charles Kosanke, Pastor of Most Holy Trinity and St. Anne's, and the Holy Hour Planning Committee members, including Mary Turner, Amelia Mata, Helena Solano, Alanna Reyes Ali, Teresa Moncivais, Sister Nina Rodriguez, CSJ, Irma Landin-Obregon, Tom Haggerty, Bill O'Brien, Kathleen Rogers, Sharon Bender, and Sister Rosemarie Abate, SHVM, and all of those Most Holy Trinity and St. Anne's parishioners who came and volunteered to make this first Holy Hour a beautiful event.



### **SPOTLIGHT ON A CIRCLE OF SUPPORT**

On Wednesday, January 22, two members of the SS John & Paul Circle in Washington MI will join our Hispanic neighbors at St. Clement parish in their preparation of Mexican Dinner Night at the MCREST homeless shelter. Last year they were relegated to making guacamole, an easy task for the inexperienced in preparing traditional Mexican food! They were received with patience and kindness by the cooks.

The Circle continues to make food pantry deliveries to a family whose husband & father was deported with the opportunity to start deliveries to another family soon. Also, we have a member who has a couple of folks that she's been driving to court appointments. We are currently looking for more help in this endeavor.

If you are interested: contact SNL at [strangersnolonger11@gmail.com](mailto:strangersnolonger11@gmail.com)

**UPDATE ON CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT SHELTER IN MEXICO BY MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP PARISH**

The Circle at Our Mother of Perpetual Help (OMOPH) kicked off a campaign to support the Casa Samaritano Shelter in Hidalgo, Mexico after Masses during the weekend of December 7th and 8h. The event was well received by the parish. About 40 parishioners stayed for a presentation about the shelter. It is run by 5 Sisters of the Sacred Heart and strives to provide food, clean clothing, and showers to hundreds of people migrating north.

The Sisters have a budget of about \$57,000 per year which they are always struggling to meet. The Circle at Our Mother of Perpetual Help was able to collect \$2,625 that weekend and expect an additional \$1,240 in pledges over this year. Our Mother of Perpetual Help is in the process of planning a Families in Flight Holy Hour in March with other churches in the area. The plan is for funds collected at this holy hour to be donated to Casa Samaritano as well.



To help, call contact Rosemary Insley at 248-885-2406 or email her at [rinsley@aol.com](mailto:rinsley@aol.com).



**ENJOY A WONDERFUL MEAL!! SUNDAY BURRITO BREAKFAST AT ST. ANNE:**

Come on the 2nd Sunday monthly, after the 8:30 Mass and after the 10:30 Mass. St. Anne, 1000 Ste. Anne St., Detroit MI 48216. This Fundraiser is for their Circle of Support.



**HELP PEOPLE WHO NEED TRANSPORTATION**

Our Circles sometime need help from outside their Circle driving a family to court, or a doctor's appointment, etc. Let us know if you want to be on our list of contacts to help now and then with driving.

Contact [strangersnolonger1@gmail.com](mailto:strangersnolonger1@gmail.com) or call 313-549-0421.

## **CAMPAIGN OF PRAYER AND FASTING** **CONTINUES:**

We promised to send you an item every week that may help you in our 3 month campaign for prayer and fasting.

Here is our recommendation for daily prayer for this week. This prayer was part of our Holy Families in Flight service last Saturday. Join the crowd in saying this prayer daily...!

### ***Prayer for Those Who Migrate***

***Mary knew the weariness of the journey;  
To Bethlehem, to Egypt, back to Nazareth.  
She knew the weariness, the fear, the  
longing for home,  
The need to continue moving, moving,  
The longing for the journey's end,  
The longing for at least a semblance of a  
home.***

***To Mary we entrust the mothers, the  
fathers, the children  
Who today are holy families  
Migrating in hope, in fear, in longing.  
For peace, for some security, for something  
like a home.***

***May they find their journey's end  
As we open ourselves to their stories,  
Their need, their spirits;  
We ask for mercy for all migrants and for  
our communities who are  
Challenged to welcome them,  
To hold up hope for a new beginning.***

***Jane Deren, Education for Justice***

## **GOT SOMETHING TO SHARE?**

We want this newsletter is to capture the vibrant life of Strangers No Longer! We know you are involved in all kinds of things to help immigrants in our area. We want to know about them—big or small. Also, you might have inspirational readings, good works stories, pictures, articles from different publications—let us know about them!

When your Circle has an event or information to share, please contact us so we can include it on the Facebook page, in our newsletter, on our upcoming webpage, and any other communication methods we come up with!

You can email [strangersnolonger11@gmail.com](mailto:strangersnolonger11@gmail.com) or call Kathy Faba at 586-295-3673.