Special Zoom Meeting: March 12, 2024 7PM

**Attendance:**  Julie Watanabe, Rose Pikor, Donna Nesbitt, Pat Watanabe, Mary Lou Latorre, Cyndi, Kathy Best, Pat Boland-Saoud Sister Mry Elaine, Sister Rose, Sister Carmen, Sister Donna.

Sister Val coordinated our SNL meeting with IHM Sisters who are working on the Southern Border in McAllen, Texas.

**Opening Prayer:**  Pat Boland-Saoud

Introductions were made by our members and the IHM Sisters.

IHM Sisters: Mary Elaine, Sister Rose, Sister Carmen, Sister Donna (who is volunteering for 10 – 14 days in Texas).

We explained our SNL group and our workings to them. Each Sister also explained their services. Each is from different places in the US. They are supported by their Church Parish and are stationed in Texas for 3 years.

They explained the services they offer in Texas, such as food, clothing and even some medicine. They offer personal welcome to the immigrants by the Church as children of God. Their mission is to only collaborate what is already happening there and they gave some personal reports on their interactions with the immigrants. They also work with the Jesuits in offering the Mass.

McAllen is about 20 minutes from the border and the Hidalgo Bridge, one of the legal places of entry with the CBD Application. The CBD application (Custom Border Patrol) was explained as a present legal process immigrants can use. They are required to use the application for an interview. The timing for applying changes, so interviews are hard to get. However, many don’t even know the CBD exists for them to use. Therefore, some are staying on the Mexican side of the border or now crossing in Arizona, due to the strict Texas immigration laws. The Humanitarian Respite Center (where Sr. Norma Pimentel is) had 800-1000 immigrants last December and now had only 200. Some unknowingly cross into private land and are arrested. Some are kidnapped off the street for ransom money ( so, some miss their interview date.)

They also mentioned that some of the immigrant communities in Texas seem to show acceptance with each other, since they are together for long periods are time. Catholic Charities are instrumental in setting up the communities as they wait for their processing. So, immigrants are not wandering in the streets. This respite center helps them to connect with their relatives and/or sponsors. Catholic Charities are so important in their journey transition. There are also some sacraments held which the immigrants love, such as Baptism and First Communion. At present a teacher to teach English would be helpful.

However, some Mennonites are there teaching English. Most immigrants come from Haiti, Hondorus and Venezuelan, and not many from Peru. The immigrants come from the countries which do not have stable governments and/or are in poverty.

This meeting was so very helpful in giving us a present day situation at McAllen, Texas. They felt that our own local SNL is valuable in serving immigrants.

Even though their parishes help with the funding, we asked if we could also contribute.

We can send funds, if we wish to: Make checks payable to :

“Sisters of IHM”.

Mary Trawinski (Treasurer)

905 N. 50th Street

McAllen, Texas 78501

We can also note the “Ministry of the Border” in our correspondence.

**Closing Prayer:** Pat W.