

Strangers No Longer Newsletter

October 2019



Upcoming Projects

Plans for Campaign of Prayer-Fasting-Action:

We envision the monthly gatherings to be held in one of the parishes of the Vicariate, and organized by one or more Circles of Support in that Vicariate. We plan to kick off the campaign in early January, at the time of the Epiphany and the Holy Family's Flight into Egypt. Plans will be discussed at the Nov. 16 Assembly of Circle Leaders. To join the Planning Committee, reply to this e-mail.

- Prayer: For each other in these difficult times so that we can be strong and united in our response to the Gospel.
- Fasting: So we can identify with those on the road, in detention camps, in tents in northern Mexico or Guatemala waiting for their asylum application numbers to be called ... they are surely hungry most of the time.
- Actions: So that our parishioners can help families and move officials toward more humane policies and practices.

Would your parish sponsor an immigrant family?

Pope Francis set the example over 4 years ago by sheltering at the Vatican several migrant families, calling on all parishes to do the same. Strangers No Longer is looking at models in other cities (Cincinnati, Chicago) to learn the process for adopting or sponsoring an immigrant family. Indeed, we have our own experiences.

- Gesu Circle of Support sponsored Carmen and Cesar, a couple applying for asylum in 2017. Gesu started by helping the couple, but soon realized they were receiving so much more from Carmen and Cesar.
- Parishioners at St. Anne for years have been helping (accompanying) immigrant families -- and recently formed a Circle of Support.

These wonderful parishioners and some of our Circles have helped dozens of families and individuals and have been blessed in return for their compassion. We believe that great blessings would come to a parish that is willing to explore the possibility of adopting or sponsoring an immigrant family. If you would like to investigate this possibility for your parish, call Bill O'Brien, 313-549-0421.

St. John Fisher Chapel hosts National Immigrant Leader Oscar Chacon:

Oscar is Executive Director of Alianza Americas, a transnational network of immigrant organizations. Oscar spoke in Metro Detroit in June to 150 Catholic leaders gathered at Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse, sponsored by Elephants in the Living Room. The parishioners of St. John Fisher Chapel will host Mr. Chacon on Saturday, November 2nd, at 6:30 PM. Details are in attached flyer. We highly recommend this event. If you plan to attend, please reply to this email so we can let parishioners know approximate number.

Immigrant Lawyer Melanie Goldberg - a fundraiser:

Melanie (Justice for Our Neighbors - Michigan, or JFON-MI) is a member of our Strangers No Longer Speakers' Bureau. She has made educational and clear presentations to 6 of our SNL parishes on the history of immigration and today's crisis. She and her JFON-MI team and board are holding a **Beacons of Hope** fundraising event to launch their new door support program. **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2019 * 3:00 PM- 5:00 PM * YPSILANTI MARKETPLACE, 16 S. WASHINGTON STREET, YPSILANTI, MI 48197.** Mix and mingle, enjoy tasty food, and hear more about JFON's work supporting immigrants and reform. RSVP by October 25th at <http://bit.ly/metrobeacon>. To learn more about JFON, contact Tori Booker at tbooker@jfonmi.org.

"The Bodega" Diaper Project :

For years Lourdes Fonseca Nearon has been collecting clothing, food, furniture items for immigrant families. Now she would like to include diapers as part of the items available for distribution to our immigrant community. She has found that there are two diaper banks in the City of Detroit. Cabrini Clinic only provides diapers for infants up to a year old. The other diaper bank is English speaking only and difficult for immigrants to navigate. She would like to compliment the Cabrini Diaper Bank and extend to beyond one year of age. Storage would be in the Meta Peace Team office located at St. Peter's Episcopal Church on Michigan and Trumbull. The distribution would take place out of the Hispanic Development Center on Trumbull. We would designate days to distribute and the mothers could pick them up. For details, or to volunteer, contact Lourdes Fonseca Nearon at 3123-282-1340 or luliss27@gmail.com.

Assembly of Circle Leaders: Next meeting to be held Saturday, Nov. 16,

10:00 AM - Noon: Anyone interested in forming a Circle of Support at your parish should consider attending this meeting. The current Circle Leaders plan to meet quarterly in order to build a community among ourselves, learn best practices, help each other start and grow our parish Circles of Support, inspire and challenge each other be true to the Gospel and the exhortations of Pope Francis, and make decisions about projects and direction. **WHERE?** St. James (Ferndale) campus of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, 241 Pearson in Ferndale on Woodward between 8 Mile and 9 Mile Roads. For more info: 313-549-0421 or billobrien2018@gmail.com



News from the Circles



The Mass for Detained Families:

600 people gathered at Holy Trinity for a Mass for the Detained on July 30, initiated by the Holy Trinity Guadalupana Society and welcomed warmly by Msgr. Charles Kosanke, Pastor of Holy Trinity (and St. Anne) and Holy Trinity parishioners. Strangers No Longer members came from all over, many with their parish or congregation banner. We collected \$11,000 which we sent to Dioceses of El Paso (Bishop Mark Seitz) and Brownsville (Bishop Daniel Flores) for their work with detained families. Bishop Don Hanchon was very encouraged with the turnout and the variety of parishes: "Today we see that we are not alone, that we are part of a large community across our region," he said. "We must continue to support each other, encourage each other, and work together in our parishes for immigration reform." Click here for front page coverage by the Detroit Catholic ---

<https://detroitcatholic.com/news/daniel-meloy/detroit-area-catholics-gather-to-pray-for-migrants-detained-at-u-s-mexico-border> Also, see the article on Bishop Seitz' (El Paso) pastoral letter on racism:

<https://www.americamagazine.org/2019/10/13/racism-border-el-paso>

New Circles Forming

St. Ambrose (Detroit) and Our Lady of Sorrows (Farmington) are having early success in starting Circles. If you need help or advice on starting a circle, contact Strangers No Longer (313-549-0421).

Circles Providing Education

First Presbyterian (Royal Oak) and St. Mary of the Hills Catholic Church (Rochester) worked together to bring Cesar Cuellar to present the reasons why he and his wife left El Salvador and their experiences as immigrants here. The Secular Franciscans (Capuchin Monastery) and Our Lady of Sorrows (Farmington) listened to a Guatemalan mom and her 11 year old son talk about why they left home and extended family to travel 2000 miles to the US Border. She also described her time separated from her children in the US Detention camp. Ss. John and Paul (Washington) had a presentation on Honduras by Prof. Gail Presbey (Univ. Detroit Mercy). Melanie Goldberg (Justice for Our Neighbors - Michigan) presented twice at parishes during the last 2 months -- once at First Presbyterian (Royal Oak) and again at Our Lady of Sorrows (Farmington). We have a great Speakers' Bureau...!

Circle Leaders Gathered for Training on Advocacy:

On Saturday, August 24, 60 Circle of Support leaders came to Our Lady of Fatima campus of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Oak Park. Bridget Theodoroff (Ss. John and Paul) presented on Catholic Social Teaching as a basis of our Strangers No Longer work. Alianza Americas staff members Amy Shannon and Zorayda Avila presented an up-to-the-minute report from Mexico and Central America, highlighting the terrifying impact of US policies toward the thousands of immigrating families. They also described the work of the hundreds of Catholic-sponsored shelters along the migrant path. As a result, the Mother of Perpetual Help Circle of Support is considering a partnership with the Sacred Heart Sisters who run Casa Samaritana in Hidalgo, Mexico. We were further inspired by beautiful moments of prayer and inclusion by Rosemary Insley (Mother of Perpetual

Help), Marisa Szptyman (Divine Child), Doug Gordon (Secular Franciscans), Marie Schimelfening (Ss. Peter and Paul Jesuit), Rich Faba (Mother Perpetual Help).

St. Regis Shoe Drive:

Over the summer and into September, St. Regis' Immigrant Circle of Support asked parishioners to donate shoes for Earhart Middle School in Detroit where more than half of the 900 students have parents applying for asylum or parents who live in fear of deportation. Hundreds of pairs of excellent-condition shoes were collected, labeled, bagged and packed into vans by parishioners after Sunday Mass each week. Twelve parishioners then spent the day at Earhart, creating a kind of shoe-store in the school. Teachers sent small groups of students to the "store." The children were measured and given time to try on and choose the shoes they wanted. The St. Regis parishioners had a chance to meet some wonderful children as well as some of the mothers who came to shop for their other children. The whole process was an "encounter" where people could meet and be transformed by each other. Congratulations, St. Regis.

Diocese of Lansing:

Several SNL Circle Leaders (Our Lady of Sorrows, Gesu, St. Mary Student Parish Ann Arbor, St. Francis of Assisi Ann Arbor) attended the Lansing Diocese "Strangers Among Us" Conference on Oct. 11. One of the Conference presenters, Ms. Amy Ketner from St. Mary Student Parish in Ann Arbor, gave a major presentation on Circles of Support. Conference organizer, Ms. Susana Chapa, shared with us some very good Catholic resources:

- <http://www.micatholic.org/advocacy/focus/2016/focus-20160301-refugees-and-catholic-social-teaching.pdf>
- <http://www.micatholic.org/advocacy/catholic-advocacy-network/vv/?vvsrsrc=%2fRegister>
- <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/>

Aid to Spiritual Growth

The Music of Her Rivers:

Renny Golden's book of poetry, published by the University of New Mexico Press, is available for purchase. Renny Golden was co-founder of the Sanctuary Movement in the mid-1980's and is still faithfully organizing.

"Her rivers are urgent witnesses, her rivers sing truths, shimmer in the darkness. Here are songs pure as water to nourish and cleanse us in the season of lies. I love this book!" (Sandra Cisneros, author of *The House on Mango Street*). Send \$20 check ("Jesuit Community UDM") to Strangers No Longer, 19972 Shrewsbury, Detroit MI 48221. Benefit for Strangers No Longer, thanks to the author.

