



**Migration and Refugee Services
Office of the Executive Director**

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March 6, 2020

Catholic Community of St. Perpetua
St. Perpetua Church
3454 Hamlin Road
Lafayette, California 94549

Dear Father Kasper,

I received from Archbishop Gomez a letter from February 2, 2020, from St. Perpetua parishioners concerned about the ongoing migrant crisis on our southern border. The Archbishop did not receive any specific name of a person to whom he could respond. I thought perhaps you might be able to share this note with them.

As you are all aware, we are in the midst of a global forced displacement crisis and we know there is a great need for the care of forced migrants in many parts of the world and specifically for our brothers and sisters coming to our southern border. Their journey is long and arduous, and it does not end when they reach the southern border. Pope Francis instructs us: “welcoming means, above all, offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally.”

We want you and your parishioners to know that we are working with lawmakers, government agencies, and private organizations including Catholic agencies on both sides of the border to make sure that the best care possible is provided and that the best solution is the one that makes its way forward. While not all of the bishops have seen the crisis in person, rest assured that many have. Even as I respond, the bishops from Texas and the bishops from the corresponding dioceses in Mexico are having one of their regular meetings in Brownsville, Texas to discuss the plight of asylum seekers along the border.

Also, the Catholic Charities organizations of the Rio Grande Valley, El Paso and Laredo are reaching across the border to provide humanitarian assistance to asylum seekers who are forced to remain in Mexico while their pleas for asylum are adjudicated in courts here in the US. CLINIC, a Catholic legal organization operating in the US, has exceptionally opened an office across the border in Mexico to provide badly needed legal advice to families.

As we continue our work on behalf of the church, we will gladly take any and all prayers you can provide for those who continue to risk their lives for their families and particularly for their children. We will continue to make the important public statements and conduct the quieter advocacy that we do each day on behalf of the bishops with the administration. Rest assured that we have been, and will continue to look for practical solutions, as the bishops meeting in Texas do each time they meet. We know that we cannot rest in finding ways to welcome and protect families who for one reason or another are forced to leave their homes and country.

We are grateful for the concern of the parishioners of St. Perpetua for our brothers and sisters and also grateful for the prayers that we show our love by our actions.

Sincerely in Christ,



William A. Canny
Executive Director

Cc: Most. Rev. Michael C. Barber, S.J.

Ps. Below please find a few resources that may be helpful at the parish level to assist migrants.

Ps. Just Faith Ministries: Exploring Migration, A Faith Journey

Just Faith Ministries' 8-week program invites participants to "formulate a personal response" to the current reality of migration by their Christian beliefs. The program, developed in partnership with Maryknoll, offers a historical, biblical, and theological lens to migration and offers concrete ways people can take action on the local level, including an immersion experience.

<https://justfaith.org/exploring-migration-faith-journey/>

Justice for Immigrants Backgrounder

The U.S. Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign (JFI) seeks to unite and mobilize Catholic institutions, individuals, and people of good will to create a culture of welcome where all migrants are treated with respect and dignity. A recent JFI backgrounder provides suggested actions that parishioners can take to assist and accompany undocumented immigrants, many of whom are asylum seekers. These actions range from helping immigrant children with school enrollment to accompanying individuals to ICE check-ins. You can download 10 Things You can Do to Accompany Undocumented Immigrants in the Community Engagement Resources section of the JFI website: <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/news/community-engagement-resources/>

Catholic Charities East Bay

Catholic Charities East Bay offers a variety of services for immigrants, including legal services for unaccompanied minors, DACA recipients, and those who have temporary protective status. In addition to specific volunteer opportunities listed on the agency's website, you can call directly to see how you can get involved as a parish with supporting their newcomer clients

<https://www.cceb.org/immigration-legal-services/>