



# JUST Love

JANUARY 2020



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF PEACE, JUSTICE AND  
ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF SAINT ELIZABETH



## **Boundless Charity at the Border: JustLove Interviews Sr. Maryanne Tracey (second from right)**



### **What motivated you to volunteer at the border?**

My Vincentian heart was my motivation for going to the border. Looking at the many pictures on TV and listening to and reading the commentaries were very disturbing to me and drew me to ask the Vincentian question, “what can I do?” The least that I could do was to be a presence and help where needed for at least two weeks to a small group of refugees in Matamoras, Mexico.

### **How do you see what you did as an expression of the charism of the Sisters of Charity?**

I was motivated by our Vincentian roots and the consistent commitment of our General Assemblies for the past 25 years which call us to work with and for the poor. I always try to live out of the statement “to strive to make life more human for those with whom we work.” It seems to me that as a Congregation our passion for serving the poor and refugees has deepened. It is out of this commitment that I was drawn to work with the refugees on the Mexican border and to go in the name of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth.

### **What was a typical day like?**

Every day at 8:30 AM we reported to the Humanitarian Respite Center run by Catholic Charities in McAllen, Texas. We would meet sisters from other Congregations and several lay men and women. We would prepare the supplies that we would be carrying over that day: soap, razors, milk, baby formula, pampers, and 250 sandwiches to give out. We would make the sandwiches a day ahead of time, so they were ready for the next day. We would go over the bridge to Matamoras, Mexico as a group at about 11:30, meet with the people spend some time with them and share the supplies that we brought. We came back most days about 2:30. We would have lunch and then do errands such as buy some supplies that they may need. The rest of the day we would go home, have dinner and prayer and rest for our adventures the next day.

### **What is one thing that surprised you?**

There were two things that stick in my mind aside from the wonderful refugees that we met: One day it was freezing cold, 38 degrees. Even with the several layers of sweaters that I brought I was unable to get warm. I was shocked to know that it got that cold in Mexico. The most upsetting thing to me was that the refugees had little to keep themselves warm and they had no relief as all they had was their small tent as a protection. We did bring over coats and gloves and made scarfs for them. The other thing that impressed me were the many, many volunteers that come to help. People from all over the United States, of varying ages and religions are a constant stream. Some have even moved down to the border temporarily or permanently.

### **What is the most important thing you would like people to know about the situation at the US/Mexican border?**

The most important thing to know is that they are beautiful people who are living in the hope of coming to the United States for a better life for their families like many of our ancestors did. It is important not to forget them and to take every opportunity to promote legislation that our government that will allow them to enter our country.

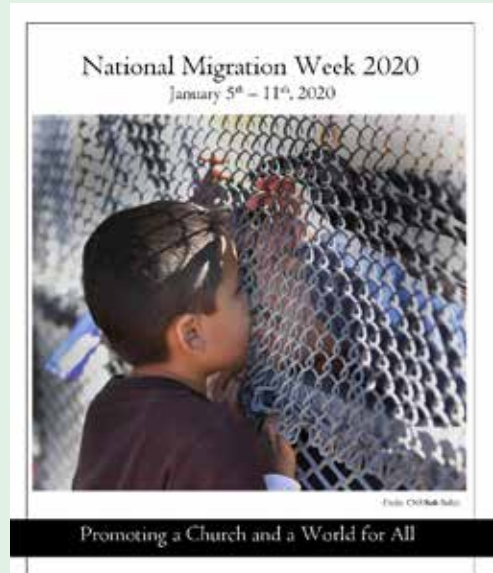
## Join in Celebrating 2020 National Migration Week

The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth are in the midst of celebrating our 160th anniversary of foundation. Mother Xavier, our founder, and many of our early sisters were immigrants to the United States and for 160 years accompanying immigrants has been a central focus of our mission and ministry. From running schools, hospitals and social service agencies for immigrants 160 years ago to our current collaboration with RAMP (Refugee Assistance Morris Partners) in serving new refugee families, the Sister of Charity see welcoming the stranger and the newcomer as a privilege and a call of the gospel.

Join us in Holy Family Chapel on January 6, 2020, 6:30 pm for our annual prayer service celebrating National Migration Week. Find below some resources for celebrating the week in your parishes and ministries:

Justice for Immigrants <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/FInal-NMW-Toolkit-2020.pdf>

Catholic Relief Services <https://www.crs.org/usops-tags/national-migration-week>



As the Sisters of Charity continue to discern how to respond to the needs of people who are inadequately sheltered, we invite you to spend a few moments of contemplation of this image *Holy Family on the Streets* by Kelly Latimore.

## JPIC Dates in January

**1 World Day of Peace** "In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons are an affront crying out to heaven." Pope Francis

**4 Feast of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton** "When so rich a harvest is before us, why do we not gather it? All is in our hands if we will but use it."

**11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day**  
– Check out the website of US Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking today <https://www.sistersagainstrafficking.org/> and share with someone something that you learned.

**12 The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord** "In baptism we are invited into such vision that sees in the life-giving waters of the earth the promise of God in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In this age of ecological emergency, the images of water that saturate our baptismal theology and prayers are as needed and relevant as ever before." Benjamin M. Stewart

**20 Martin Luther King Day** "The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people."

**22 Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children** "The right to life is the first among human rights." Pope Francis

**27-February 1 National Catholic Schools Week** – Write a note of support to a teacher or administrator in a Catholic school.