



March 12, 2020

Dear Holy Trinity Migrant Team Familia,

Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the migrant team ministry at Holy Trinity. As our support grows, we want to provide our larger “familia” with a quarterly report on the work parishioners are doing to accompany the migrants and refugees in our community. As you may know, an unprecedented **70.8 million** people around the world have been forced from home. Holy Trinity parishioners have answered the call of Pope Francis to “work together to practice hospitality, especially towards those whose lives are most vulnerable” as this will “make us better human beings, better disciples, and a more united Christian people.”

Accompaniment

The focus of the HT Migrant Team continues to be on accompaniment. Over the past year, Holy Trinity has fully supported **Mario**, a young man seeking asylum after fleeing Nicaragua. Mario is sponsored by a family at Holy Trinity. Our Migrant Fund has supported Mario’s basic living (clothing, housing, food, transportation) and medical/dental care. Another Holy Trinity parishioner has provided the necessary pro bono legal services. Mario received his work permit a few weeks ago, and his hearing date is scheduled for 2024. Mario is an active member of Our Lady Queen of the Americas, often playing guitar at Mass. He is a volunteer at the Washington English Center which assists new immigrants in improving their English skills. He has earned several professional technical designations and became recently employed by a local tech company.

Fredys is a young man who fled to the U.S. from Honduras in 2017. He spent several weeks in detention in Arizona while going through the asylum process with the Kino Border Initiative. After achieving asylum, Fredys was sent to Falls Church, VA to live with his sister. The Migrant Team has supported Fredys in acquiring his GED, taking ESL classes, and in applying for his green card. Fredys works in construction, and he hopes to one day bring his two sons (ages 2 and 4) to live with him.



Illustrations Courtesy of Manuela Guillén (Instagram: @lazy.beam)

Last February, Fredys' brother **Enrique** also fled the drug violence with his wife **Yosselin** and their four boys (ages 2, 4, 6 and 13). Enrique and his family arrived at the Kino Border Initiative, having made their way through Guatemala and Mexico on foot and bus as part of the migrant caravan. Our team has supported this family by providing short-term housing, medical care, legal IDs, and transportation. We also worked with JustNeighbors to provide pro bono legal services. Our team has also provided access to financial literacy programs.

You may have had the opportunity to hear Mario and Fredys share their stories at our migrant event on February 1. More than 50 parishioners gathered to hear their stories and to learn how our community is addressing the complexities and challenges of migration. It was a powerful witness, and we speak on behalf of the entire HT Migrant Team when we say that our lives are touched on an almost daily basis by the relationships with Mario, Fredys, and Enrique and by the generosity of volunteers and supporters. We see the Holy Spirit at work.

In addition to accompaniment, Holy Trinity has been identified as a resource for other local churches and synagogues as well as with organizations working on the border. Over the past few months, we have worked with Maryknoll to identify a sponsor and housing for an asylum seeker (**Yanilson** arrived in the early hours of March 2!). We have met with CAIR Coalition to explore ways to support their work with mentally disabled detainees. We are also fielding several requests from law students working at the Georgetown Law Center for Applied Studies. Currently we have housing/support requests for an individual from Cuba and a mother and daughter from Western Central Africa.

What's Next?

"Refugees do not leave their country because they want to, but because they are forced to do so. They leave in search of life—'not a better life, just life.'" That is an excerpt from the book *Dying to Live: Stories from Refugees on the Road to Freedom* by Danielle Vella. Danielle read these words at a gathering

at Holy Trinity on March 1. During this season of Lent, this statement resonated with many of the attendees.

The role of the HT Migrant Team continues to evolve. Thanks in large part to your financial support, we have not had to say "no" to a request for support. In the coming months, we will continue to cultivate relationships with other faith and nonprofit organizations to expand our resource network as well as to explore opportunities to accompany the men, women and children in our community in their "search of life."

Thank you for living a faith that does justice.

Ashley Klick
Pastoral Associate for Social Justice

Jeanne Rossomme
Lead, HT Migrant Team

P.S. We continue to host biweekly conference calls on Monday evenings at 7pm. Summaries from these calls and active needs of the community are shared to the larger email list (205 members!) the following day. If you would like to receive these emails, please contact Ashley at aklick@trinity.org.