



December 2022

Dear Holy Trinity Migrant Team Familia:

Over 100 parishioners and friends joined the Migrant Familia on December 10 for what has become our annual opportunity to pray and celebrate together. 2022 has been quite a year for our familia! As many of you know, every other Monday approximately 25 parishioners/supporters gather over Zoom to discuss the accompaniment of our familia- a familia that has now grown to 20 individuals/families from 12 countries! At one point during the year, we changed our opening prayer model to be one that addresses the consolations and desolations faced each week. You may have prayed with us on a Monday evening or read them in the bi-weekly eLetter. We would like to share a few of our more recent consolations:

The consolation of unexpected — and timely — generosity: We are grateful for Michele Jolin and Kevin Downey as they open their home to our newest familia member, Angie, who, seeking refuge from violence, is bereft of her own home in Colombia, where her 3-year-old son remains.

The consolation of language, facilitated with love: We're blessed by the work of the tutors who bring English — and confidence, and friendship — to our families. We welcome newcomers to our tutoring crew: Esther, Mary Ann, Sylvia, and Jolene, as we rejoice in explosions of language from our littlest familia members — including 2-year-old Herman's "see ya," and 2-year-old Samara's excited "wow."

The consolation of thanksgiving: Our gratitude this season is robust: we're thankful for one another, and for the families we are privileged to support. We count among our richest blessings: — 20 families from 12 countries, — their 23 lively children, and — their heartening models of resilience, faith, and joy.

The consolation of refuge: So many of us have been inspired as we've walked with our friend Mario these past four years. His humbleness, helpfulness, and deep faith have been a model and a blessing. It was a privilege to sit behind Mario as the merits of his asylum case were assessed, and to hear, as he did, the final words of the judge: "Welcome to the United States." We are grateful that the burden of uncertainty has been lifted from Mario's shoulders — and overjoyed that he will remain safe, and in our midst.

The consolation of light — at the end of a long tunnel: Today, Jihan Cheikho and eldest daughter Zozan Cheikho — Kurdish refugees from Syria who were welcomed by Holy Trinity in 2017 during the turmoil that accompanied the temporary Muslim ban — were sworn in as American citizens. We hope their achievement lives as inspiration for all those aspiring toward this goal.

The consolation of courage: We are humbled by the bravery of Hadia, Bernadette, and Julien Patrick, never more so than last weekend when they shared their personal histories as part of a panel presentation during Holy Trinity's World Day of Migrants celebration. Their testimonies of love for their countries of origin, of the unfathomable dangers that forced them to flee, and of the suffering they endured on their route to safety, renewed our appreciation for the gift they are in our lives. We thank these remarkable friends for the generosity with which they shared their experiences, both painful and filled with love.

The consolation of progress and milestones: —Sasha's first day of American school; Olena's new apartment; Luana's first school bus ride; Hameeds's new car; Yajaira's 11th birthday; Bernadette's green card application, finally complete.

These are only a few of the moments that your love, compassion and generosity made possible this year. Your financial support enabled us to welcome families from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Honduras, Haiti and Colombia and to support all of our familia in the pursuit of their personal and professional goals. Each month your generosity assists with rent, health expenses (including a focus on mental health), legal costs and more. The gift of security, safety and support means so much.

While we are all eager to focus on the joyous milestones and accomplishments of our families, desolations do exist. Affordable housing eludes many of our larger families. Access to quality medical, psychological and dental care in a timely manner continues to be challenging. Anxiety over legal decisions and the future are hard to escape. And there is the desolation of absence. Gathered together in the Chapel of St. Ignatius last Saturday, we prayed for our migrant familia separated from loved ones in countries to which they cannot return. We extended our love in a special way to our friends separated from a child — including Angie, Edras, and Enrique; or from a mother — including Denis, Laryssa, and Hadia; and for each member of our family far outside the rich warmth of their families' embrace.

In October, Mary Lou Rife introduced parishioners to immigration poets. One poet, Warsan Shire, writes in "Home":

*no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city running as well*

Afghanistan, Ukraine, Honduras, Haiti, Nicaragua, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Sudan, Syria, Guatemala, and Colombia were the homes of our familia. As they accept their new reality and work to establish a fulfilling life in the United States, we embrace the role of accompaniment promoted by Pope Francis. Thank you for your support of this truly life-giving ministry. We look forward to a new year of greater consolations and fewer, or at least more manageable, desolations.

Ashley Klick
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Feast of Guadalupe with the members of our HT Migrant Familia.