

PRECIOUS BLOOD FAMILY

**IN COLLABORATION WITH
BORDER SERVANT CORPS**

LAS CRUCES / EL PASO

BORDER IMMERSION

FEBRUARY 13-17, 2023

**Missionaries
Companions
ASC Sisters
Border Servant
Corps Leader**



OUR MISSION:

- Hear the cry of the Blood from our brothers and sisters at the Border
- Look, listen, and see the truth
- Meet those already at work
- Meet and serve migrant families
- Plan our response

PRESENTING ORGANIZATIONS:

- **Border Servant Corps**
- **Annunciation House**
- **Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey**
- **Border Patrol**
- **Lutheran Family Services**
- **ACLU**
- **Hope Border Institute, Catholic Diocese of El Paso**



Preparing a meal with Pastor Rosemary at Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey.



WHAT IS THE CURRENT SITUATION AT THE BORDER?

- The rules are ever changing; a problem for ALL, even the Border Patrol.
- Some asylum seekers processed, then turned over to Annunciation House, Border Servant Corps, others, for preparation to travel to sponsors.
- Some asylum seekers forced to remain in Mexico; extremely vulnerable to extortion, kidnap, food, and housing shortages, and victimization especially if LGBTQ+.
- Some asylum seekers only admitted after registration on new CBP One App (many technical issues, excludes the destitute, those without Wi-Fi or phones or basic English or Spanish, and those in imminent danger who can't wait)
- Title 42 (policy used to expel asylum seekers due to Covid issues) set to expire May 11. Results of this change hard to predict; additional rules may be enacted.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR ASYLUM?

- Those who can prove that they are victims of past persecution or have well-founded fear of future persecution have a good case with good legal representation but are not guaranteed. The central reason for this persecution must have been your:
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Nationality
 - Political opinion, or
 - Membership in a particular social group
 - Some of these may be combined with other facts to create a valid asylum claim

Who Doesn't?

Those whose asylum request is based solely on economic hardship and starvation will be denied.

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED ASYLUM PROCEDURE?

- Individual enters the US at a designated point of entry.
- Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) have power to quickly deny admission, or process someone for asylum.
- Those in process may have a “credible fear interview.”
- Those passing will be registered, fingerprinted, background checked against FBI, Interpol, USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Service) and various other entities records.
- Single men may then be held in detention, but there is no capacity for women or families in the detention centers. These are released to a group like Border Servant Corps, Annunciation House, etc. for a shower, new clothes, a hot meal and assistance in making it to their sponsor.
- They are then “paroled into the US” (immigration parole) and must check in with ICE (US Immigration and Enforcement) at their final destination within 60 days (because warrant has been issued.)
- The long asylum process begins: it takes 5-7 years to get an asylum decision. Approximately 43% of asylum cases were granted nationwide in 2022. Rate varies greatly from state to state. The rate is 1% granted at El Paso.

WHERE ARE ASYLUM SEEKERS COMING FROM?

At Border Servant Corps we saw the flags at left displayed from the ceiling above hungry asylum seekers having some lunch.

BSC only displays the flags of those who have come through their facility. The number of countries represented is large.



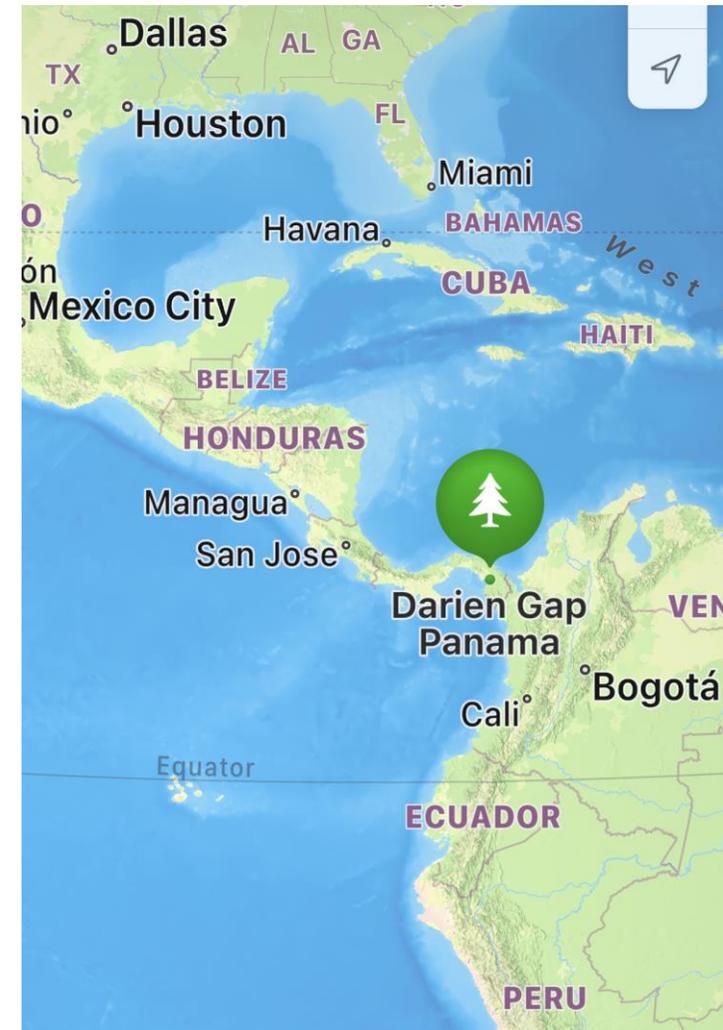
For Fiscal 2022, the top numbers of migrant encounters at the border came from:

Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, Honduras, Venezuela, Romania, Nicaragua, Colombia, Turkey, "Other," El Salvador, Haiti, Brazil, Peru, Ukraine, China, Ecuador, Russia, India

Many now flying from Asia & Africa into Ecuador & Colombia where immigration rules are lax, then travelling north to the US.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS FOR MIGRANTS HEADING TO OUR SOUTHERN BORDER?

- Treacherous terrain: those coming from South America must pass through the Darien Gap on foot.



WHO IS HELPING AT THE BORDER?

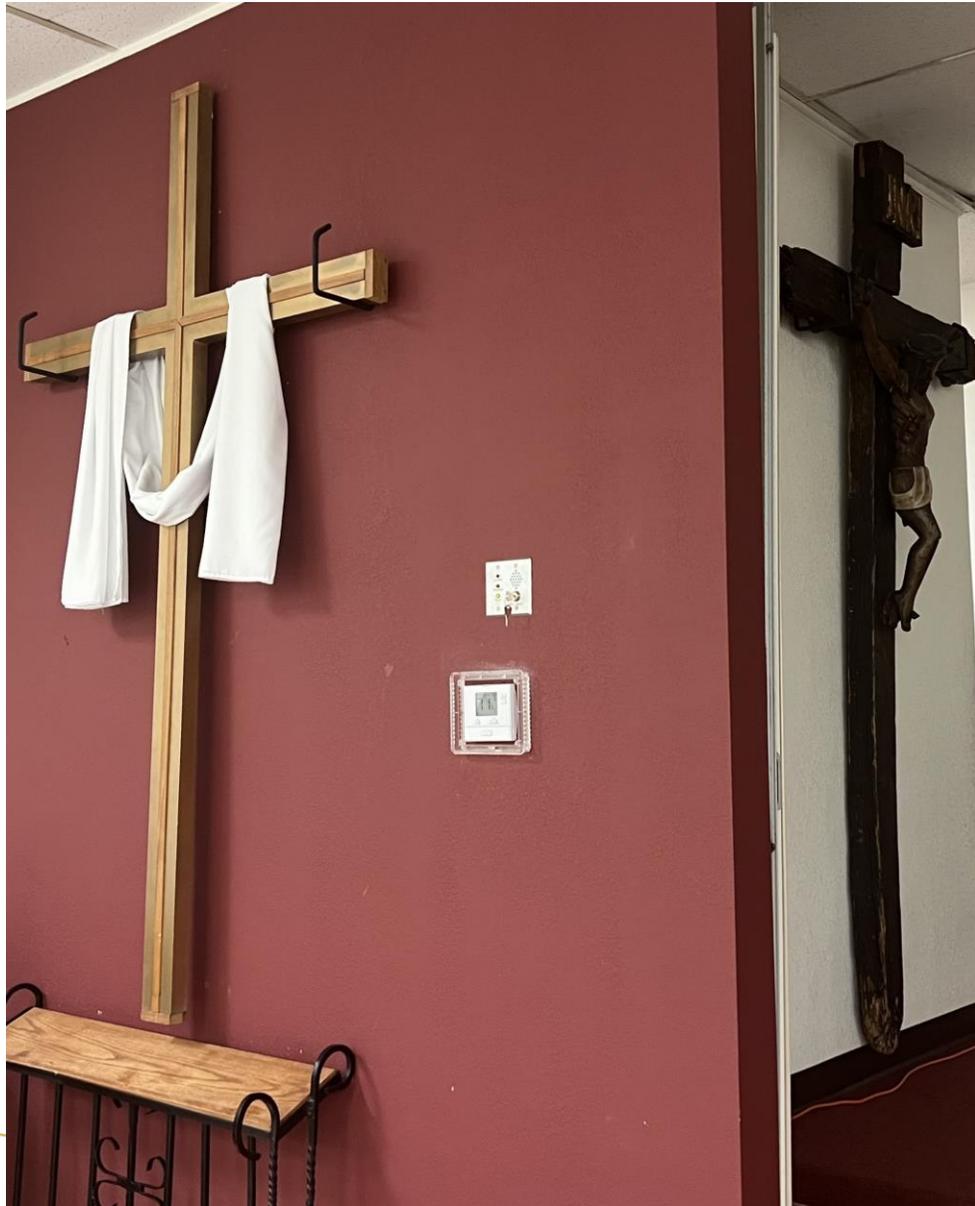
- **Annunciation House**: the primary Hospitality Center in the region; five houses.
- **Director Ruben Garcia** is the point of contact between the Department of Homeland Security and the migrant shelters. (All by cell phone!)
- Basic needs are provided for guests. Almost all are moving toward their sponsor's destination within 48 hours.
- Those with no sponsors are assisted in finding one and may stay longer.
- **When Annunciation House and other shelters are overwhelmed, Ruben Garcia calls on partners elsewhere in the US to assist folks for up to 48 hours to welcome them and help them get to their sponsors. (The KC Diocese December Bus!)**

WHO IS HELPING AT THE BORDER?

- **Border Servant Corps:** works collaboratively with Annunciation House and other organizations to accompany migrant families on the U.S. / Mexico border.
- Provides a secure temporary hospitality center for asylum seekers released by ICE or the Border Patrol.
- Provides welcome, basic needs (food, hygiene items, general wellness, etc) and assistance with transportation to airport and bus station so asylees can continue their journey to their final destination.
- **Provides educational and inspirational opportunities for Immersion experiences at the border.**

WHO IS HELPING AT THE BORDER?

- **Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey:** Provides welcome, basic needs (food, hygiene items, general wellness, etc) as well as pastoral care. Migrants wounded in body and soul come to pray before the wounded Christ on the Crucifix.
- **Lutheran Family Services:** Provides government funded services to UN recognized refugee populations, and some other groups. Helps get services to humanitarian parolees from Ukraine and Afghanistan. Can provide case management for asylum seekers.
- **Hope Border Institute, Catholic Diocese of El Paso:** provides grants and aid to support initiatives and shelters in Ciudad Juarez, across the border from El Paso, for those required to “remain in Mexico.”
- **And Others!**



At Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, Father Juan de Jesus provides pastoral care for the migrants who come to their church / shelter.

Both the cross and the crucifix adorn their sanctuary.

So often he finds migrants, wounded in body and soul make their way to the suffering Christ on the crucifix.

THE BORDER PATROL

- **We heard both positive and negative stories.** There certainly was evidence of a few “bad actors.”
- We met with a male and a female agent. It was crystal clear that their jobs were stressful, dangerous, and disheartening as they try to perform **when “the rules” change often, and without notice.** This is their number one concern, and it is “our fault.”
- Border Patrol agents are now performing many duties outside their job descriptions: caring for families with children until they can be transported to the proper place, etc. This takes them away from their primary tasks, and they feel unable to do a good job.
- **They seek to control cross-border drug smuggling, protect migrants from exploitation – or worse, rescue migrants who are lost or in trouble, as well as maintain the integrity of the southern border.**

BIG TAKEAWAYS...

- **Change is on US!**
- **Passionate individuals (Just one person!) can be tremendous agents for change!**
- **We can share the care of Asylum seekers and all immigrants, and that is what Jesus calls on us to do!**

CHANGE IS ON US:

- **Border Patrol Agent** we spoke to: “The rules” change often, (both for individual migrant groups and asylum seekers) and without notice. **“Only YOU can Fix this!”**
- WE are the only ones who can motivate lawmakers to Fix the Immigration system.
- **Ruben Garcia:** This is not a problem owned by border communities. It’s owned by all Americans. **Jesus tells us to Welcome the Stranger!** When numbers overwhelm the shelters in El Paso he needs to send buses to welcoming, prepared groups. **Get Ready!**

Collaborate with other groups and friends! What’s needed? A place to welcome 50 people with a place to shower and sleep for possibly 1-2 nights, good food for 1-2 days, clothes and toiletries for their journeys, and help getting to the airport or bus station for the trip to their sponsor. (Sponsor pays.)

JUST ONE PASSIONATE PERSON CAN BE A TREMENDOUS AGENT FOR CHANGE!

- **“CECI”** A wonderful woman who saw a need and went to work. She hated seeing worried asylum seekers dropped at the airport to fend for themselves. Building relationships with airport entities as she worked, she now provides a place for asylum seekers to get their bearings, sleep over if necessary, and receive clear information about how to proceed. “They will ask you to remove your shoes, but you will get them back.”



JUST ONE PASSIONATE PERSON CAN BE A TREMENDOUS AGENT FOR CHANGE!

Ruben Garcia, a devout Catholic Rockhurst College graduate, is the 40 year Director of Annunciation House. Known to possess the “most important cell phone in El Paso,” he takes calls from Border Patrol and ICE, locating a place of welcome for migrants in any situation.

While we were meeting with him, his phone buzzed. He apologized, answered it, and said, “I’m putting this on speaker-phone so you can see what we do.”

A Border Patrol Agent was calling from Roswell, NM. Very politely he asked if there might be a place for a smuggled family he had just taken in. Ruben asked their home country: Ecuador. After several investigations in his phone files, Ruben asked when they could arrive.

Ruben challenged us to “get something done, NOT just investigate.”



MOVING FORWARD...

- **How will we begin to respond to what we have seen, felt, and now have begun to understand?**
- **Can we accompany our brothers and sisters who are desperate for a new life?**
- **How can we establish a relationship in solidarity with refugees, asylum seekers and those who are undocumented? All are here, many with no path to anything. How do we serve them?**
- **Education of our own members and Companions and communities is vital.**
- **What can we establish that will enable us to collaborate with others?**
- **How can we best welcome and care for these brothers and sisters in need?**



Precious Blood Family
At the Border

El Paso TX
Las Cruces NM



Double-tap to enter text



Border Servant Corps
Annunciation House

Janaan's House

Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey

Border Patrol



Lutheran Family Services ACLU
HOPE Border Institute,
Catholic Diocese of El Paso