

CSA COMMUNITY ALONG THE BORDER

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“In spite of the wall, the border can be a sign of solidarity.”



“I am working with those who are poor and many of them are immigrants.”



“I have a dream that we can all be friends! That we will become people of honor tall in spirit full of reverence for the earth and each other. We will drop our guns and our walls and our greeds. Then there will be enough for all and the world will be safe again for children and living things.” Mary Southard, CSJ

SIGNS OF OUR TIMES

by Marilyn Bever, CSA

“Jesus’ spirituality was thoroughly contextual. He read the signs of his times and taught his followers to do the same. We take Jesus seriously when, among other things, we begin to read the signs of our time with honesty and sincerity. (Jesus Today, xvii) This statement of Albert Nolan has led me to reflect on the signs of our times manifest on the border. Where am I being challenged to take Jesus seriously? The signs of our times are multiple and diverse. But as I ponder the border between Arizona and Mexico three signs of our times tug at my soul. In spite of the wall, the border can be a sign of solidarity. In the midst of strident voices, the border can call for a different consciousness. Amidst multiple polarities the border invites integration.

SOLIDARITY Current cosmology and our mystical tradition both teach that we are one with all that is. In our bodies and our souls we are connected to one another, all creation, and the past and future. As a Christian, if I truly believe in this oneness, I must see that I am connected with the events on the border. What is happening to the immigrants, the deportees, the drug runners and the border patrol affects my life and my soul. To be in solidarity means that all people everywhere have a claim on my attention and my response.

CONSCIOUSNESS Reflecting on the border can be a constant and vivid reminder that we live all our life on the threshold between then and now, here and there, now and not yet. We are never to stay stuck and immobile. The Spirit is always beckoning, calling, leading. The border can reveal a life other than my own, and challenge me to observe with God’s perspective. What I observe may make me uncomfortable but it gives me an opportunity to stay in my discomfort and pay attention. The Advent call to stay awake, be alert, is our lifelong call to live with consciousness, mindfulness, awareness. And often I don’t know what to do with the

consciousness on the border, but I simply wait and ask to be shown my way of response.

INTEGRATION The reality on the border reminds me that this is the space where spirituality and justice meet. Action on behalf of justice needs to be grounded in contemplation. It’s not a choice of either/or but of both/and. True prayer and contemplation leads to a deeper compassion and awareness of others; involvement with social justice issues leads to more authentic prayer. And both prayer and action often lead to an admission of our helplessness and humanness. Both lead to reliance on our God of unconditional love and the mystery of God in our world.

Establishing an Immigration Legal Practice on the Border

by Susan Kolb CSA

As the U.S. President again tackles the thorny issue of U.S. Immigration law reform, I want to report that I have taken some steps in the direction of starting an immigration law practice. I attended a workshop for the establishment and management of an immigration law practice presented by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) in Charlotte, NC in February. We were given much valuable information and the tools to begin a business plan. CLINIC was established by the U.S. Conference of Bishops to assist immigrants. The agency has developed an expertise in all aspects of immigration services. They provide training and support. There were about thirty participants in the two day workshop. The process of doing needs assessments, demographic research and determining a budget were some of the topics covered. The materials given to us are invaluable. I plan to work in close collaboration with this agency in the future.

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Prospective Associates at a formation meeting



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I am beginning the work necessary to establish such a practice. It will take some time as I am still working full time as a managing attorney at Southern Arizona Legal Aid. I am working with those who are poor and many of them are immigrants. I request your prayers and look forward to discussing this with you.

Ministry Across the Border Experiences of Migrants in Naco, Sonora

by Mary Rose Obholz CSA

Because of recent developments regarding new regulations of repatriation which involve lateral deportation, much of the work of the migrant centers in Naco and Agua Prieta, Mexico has a different focus. Many of the migrants captured by Border Patrol are transported to Tucson and Nogales. The migrants that come to the Naco Center are usually people who are deported by ICE (Immigration Custom Enforcement) from their place of employment, homes and other localities in Arizona, Texas, and California. I continue to be involved with the Migrant Center but also volunteer with No More Deaths, The Samaritan Project, and other organizations doing humanitarian relief in the desert areas of Sonora where many have died crossing to what they hope is a better life. These groups put out water and help migrants to receive food and medical treatment when necessary. I have also been committed to informing CSA and others about the stories the migrants tell and information I am sent through resources that have known the challenges of immigration. Another aspect of ministry involves coordinating and teaching English to many children and adults in Naco, Sonora, Mexico.

CSA Associates Bisbee–Naco Arizona

In February of this year, Deacon Tony Underwood, the administrator of St. Patrick Parish/St. Michael Mission, invited us, the Sisters of St. Agnes, to present to the parishioners information about our Congregation. Sisters Kathy, Susan, Mary Rose and Marilyn eagerly availed themselves of this opportunity.

As a result of the brief presentations following the Sunday liturgies, February 26-27, ten people have expressed an interest to discern the associate program. Sisters Kathy, Mary Rose, and Marilyn agreed to share the responsibility for leading the prospective associates in their discernment and formation. The monthly formation meeting is usually at 1113 West

Ranch Update

by Srs. Pat Younger & Kathy Cook

What exactly is happening on the Goar Ranch, down on the Border? You'd be surprised! Sisters Pat, Kathy and Marilyn have been the brawn and brains of the ranch improvements and upkeep. The areas around our living spaces have become something to be admired. The weeds and grass have been tamed. Dead trees and dead wood have been eliminated. Old, long forgotten items have been gathered into piles. Two small fields near the houses have been cleared to make the ranch a fire safe environment. Everything has been hauled away by wheelbarrow, hand trucks, ropes and muscles. Another avenue of activity was to assist in preparing the rental, ranch houses for the arrival of the last two members of the ranch community. Four large pecan trees are a blessing and a challenge from November to April. They take their turns dropping nuts. This means a daily ritual of picking up nuts. *Then* there are fire ants...there are more hills than can be counted. Ant bait sometimes works for a while, but baiting, poisoning, discouraging the ant hills doesn't seem to have a long term effect. Maybe this year will find less activity.



Sr Pat clearing the land!

Purdy Lane, although other places are available. The prospective associates participate in the formation meetings with interest, enthusiasm, and energy. Ordinary Sisters is especially well received and read with interest.

Others who came for the presentation, prefer at this time to remain in touch through prayer and interest. Sisters Mary Rose and Marilyn meet periodically with these individuals for prayer and conversation. Keep in mind and prayer all these interested persons and those who mentor and guide them.



Reflection of a Guilty Bystander Streamlining in Tucson, AZ

by Mary Rose Obholz CSA

I share this because the streamlining process has so deeply affected me and has changed me. I don't want to judge or shame others—I only ask questions of myself and pray that others support and love—truly love the migrants who are our brothers and sisters.

As I entered the second floor courtroom of the Federal Building in Tucson, I saw about seventy people to the left. They were Mexicans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Nicaraguans. There were about fifteen women and the rest men, some very young. All were shackled both hands and feet; all accused of entering the United States illegally. To the right were their accusers and in the front was a judge who read the charges as eight stood in front of him and with the advice of counsel pleaded guilty. This is called streamlining for a reason. My heart broke as I saw each group shuffle out and continue to be replaced by another eight until all seventy had seen their 'day in court'.

I thought of Jesus as he was condemned and led away. What I was led to believe about our system of justice was destroyed within me that day. My heart cries out for justice and mercy. The whole system is broken and then I think have we always been this way? I am so sad because we speak of the best country in the world and we believe we can play at being God.

And the question is, "Were you, Jesus, in that courtroom? I do believe you stood with the accused. And you were powerless and the one language cried out you are guilty.

And I, like Peter, wanted to scream out just as he did with the sword. But that's the violence I abhor.

And I keep thinking if I'm not part of the solution, I'm part of the problem. And violence breeds violence.

One of the questions continues to be: Do I just stand silent as I see the humiliation of people? What can I be for the people? My God, I feel a sense of powerlessness- I feel a sense of shame. What is the answer? One thing I know—this I know—I do not carry the burden alone. Where am I in the courtroom? Am I the judge who reads the charges and asks are you guilty or not guilty? Am I the prosecutor who presents the migrants? Am I the attorney who recommends pleading guilty? Am I the silent bystander? Or am I one of the Samaritans who reaches out and binds up the wounds of the broken hearted?

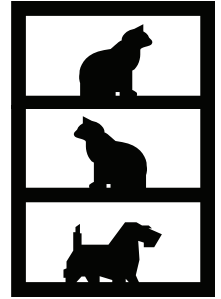
Creatures Great and Small

by Sr Marilyn Winkel

There are many who are familiar with the pets on Purdy Lane. But if you are not, here is a brief description. There is Chesi, S. Pat's little white dog; he is social, lovable, and everyone's friend. He has the privilege of car rides (and loves them!!). He even goes shopping at times. ACE Hardware Store in Bisbee allows pets inside and provides a cart for them to ride along while "humans" shop. Chesi is the delight of many customers!!

Sky is S. Kathy's white indoor/outdoor cat; he is not quite as social as Chesi, but lovable, everyone's friend, and an agile climber and skilled hunter. Sky is an outdoor night hunter. His internal clock tells him when it is time for a nap. He alternates the place of his nap between his own house or S. Pat's house, using the pet bed for as long as he pleases.

Lupe is S. Susan's feline indoor companion; she often exhibits friendly behavior, but prefers to sleep and keep to herself. She is known as "a comfortable cat". These pets provide all the sisters at Purdy Lane with companionship, amusing stories, and entertainment.



Sisters Networking in the Border Areas of Arizona

Srs Kathy Cook & Susan Kolb

Our CSA ranch community hosted an inter-community gathering in October, 2010. Those who participated were four School Sisters of Notre Dame and four Medical Missionaries, all from Douglas, a possible new CSA associate from Benson and the five of us. We all work in Border Ministry in a variety of ways. Discussion centered on what each Sister is doing in her ministry and the sharing of personal interests. A hot topic centered on the fact that at this point the repatriated are being transported to Nogales, AZ instead of Naco and Agua Prieta. We have had several gatherings since— one in Double Adobe in December and discussion sessions in Douglas with the Sisters in February and March. Sisters Susan and Mary Rose have joined the Notre Dame Sisters in traveling to a meeting in Nogales Sonora regarding immigration. This meeting was organized by Dioceses without Borders. Also the Notre Dame Sisters, the Medical Missionaries and the Sisters of St. Agnes have attended St. Albert's forum in Tucson which focused on science and theology. In April Sister Mary Rose and the Notre



Dame Sisters of Douglas attended a meeting in El Paso. The meeting not only focused on Mexico but also on the challenges

of world immigration. These exchanges have created a positive energy in the Sisters who work in this area of AZ.

Border Ministries in Bisbee-Naco, Arizona

By Srs Marilyn Winkel & Kathy Cook

St. Patrick's in Bisbee and St. Michael's Mission in Naco are two parishes on the Arizona/Mexican border. Though several miles apart, they are served by the same pastoral staff. It is in these parish settings that Sisters Kathy Cook and Marilyn Winkel find their ministry and opportunities for building community. Sister Kathy has been ministering at St. Michael's for three years as a Director of Religious Education. As a pleasant surprise, she has seen an increase in the number of children attending religious education classes this year. These children, grades K to 7 attend class after their regular school day. Word has spread that opportunities are available for sacraments and education. Palominos, a neighboring community to the northwest of Bisbee-Naco without a religious education program, has some youngsters who have joined the program. There are school age children preparing for Baptism and when appropriate are enrolled in the RCIA process. Sister Patricia Younger assists in teaching the fourth grade children. Confirmation class is also the responsibility of Sister Kathy. The ministry role for Sister Marilyn at St. Patrick's is similar. As the DRE, her responsibilities for religious education include classes for children in grades 1 to 7 and the Confirmation class. Sister Marilyn also teaches in the RCIA process; she prepares children from both parishes for these sacraments and the adults at St. Michael's.



Sr Mary Winkel leads the RCIA process



Sr Kathy Cook, religion instructor for children

A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By Sr Mary Elise Leiker

It was November 8, 2010, an exciting and memorable day for me. The intent of this article is to share the highlights and insights gained on a trip to Nogales, Arizona.

Invited by Sister Marilyn Bever, a member of the JustFaith group of Saint Louis the King Parish in Glendale, Arizona, to join the group on the trip to the border city, I eagerly awaited this opportunity. Arriving in Nogales we were met and welcomed by Rev. Sean Carroll, S.J. We had come to learn about the Jesuit Mission on the Border and he embraced the opportunity to teach us.

Father Sean walked us to the Port of Entry, one of several located along the Arizona/Mexico border. When from the Port of Entry, I looked up and saw the "wall" on a high hill. I was saddened. It is supposed to keep undocumented immigrants out, but its presence separates the people in the city which extends beyond the border into Mexico. An Immigration Homeland Security Guard at the Port of Entry graciously answered our questions after we informed him that we were not from the press. From him we learned that deportees arriving at the Port of Entry are vulnerable to kidnapping, forced collaboration in organized crime, forced extortion of family members, robbery and sexual assault.

Having heard about the painful reality existing at the Port of Entry for the deportees, I had much to ponder in my heart. Fr. Sean gave a wonderful presentation about the Kino Initiative which began in 2009. He explained that this project is cosponsored by the Diocese of Tucson and the Mexican Archdiocese of Hermosillo.



Dioceses Across Borders includes people from the Kino Project, people from the dioceses of Tucson, Phoenix and Hermosillo

Sister Mary Elise has much to share regarding her experiences at the Nogales Port of Entry. Because of limitation of space, we request that you speak with her or the sisters along the border who belong to Dioceses Across Borders. This group includes the Dioceses of Phoenix, Tucson and the Archdiocese of Hermosillo.

Sisters Susan, Mary Rose, or Mary Elise will be happy to give further information or you can go to the website: scarroll@calprov.org