



Fall 2019

Number 45

Corazones Sin Fronteras/Frontera México-Estados Unidos Todas y Todos somos Forasteros/Migrantes

Aunque quieran construir muros físicos o imaginarios contra otros, no es posible detener el flujo de la movilidad humana. En la Biblia se nos narra la historia de un pueblo nómada en busca de la tierra prometida donde mana leche y miel. Todo ser humano deseamos vivir mejor, en paz y con justicia y dignidad. En la actualidad hemos visto un fenómeno migratorio de Centro América y otros lugares a toda la frontera norte de México con el deseo de entrar a Estados Unidos. En la misión como hermanas IHM en Ciudad Juárez Chihuahua, estamos viviendo esta experiencia de recibir a olas de seres humanos que por muchos años no se había visto en esta magnitud.

Esta realidad nueva es de una situación migratoria urgente que se presentó desde octubre del 2018 por medio de caravanas de miles de personas: Cubans, Guatemaltecas, Hondureñas, Salvadoreñas, Colombians, Haitians, etc. Cruzaron inicialmente por el río Suchiate pareciendo esta ola de seres humanos como el pueblo bíblico cruzando el río Jordán. Tocando tierra en Tapachula Chiapas muchos de ellos llegaron sin documentos y sin solicitar un permiso migratorio en México. El no tener unas estadísticas adecuadas sobre la presencia migratoria no permite probar la situación como una “crisis migratoria”, pero se vive esto en toda la frontera.

Todas y todos como personas migrantes; cada vez que nos movemos de un lugar a otro estamos dejando parte de nuestra vida, tradiciones, idioma y lengua, cultura. En esa trayectoria de movilidad muchas personas migrantes han sufrido rechazo, marginación, violencia, han sido secuestradas, han sido parte de trata de personas, extorsión, etc. La mayoría llegan con miedo, traumatizados tanto niños, niñas, jóvenes y adultos y con el deseo de cruzar a EU deseando un espacio seguro en el que puedan vivir con su familia y no ser dañados por las maras, pandillas, narcos, militares, y por el sistema político de un gobierno opresor sin libertad de expresión.

Ven a EU como el país que les podría apoyar, entender y ofrecer una vida más digna de la que están viviendo en sus lugares de origen.

En Ciudad Juárez se manejan numerosas estadísticas no muy certeras dados por el Centro de Atención a Inmigrantes (que ahora se convierte para Migrantes), debido a la necesidad urgente. Se calcula que en Juárez hay de 6 mil a 7 mil migrantes con diferente situaciones y estatus migratorias. Algunos y algunas están esperando ser atendidos por la Aduana y “Protección” Migratoria (CBP), otros ya han tenido de 1 a 3 citas con el juez y han sido retornados a México por el Protocolo de Protección” a Migrantes (MPP) hasta lograr una solicitud de Asilo. Muchos Mexicanos lo consideran como vergüenza que su país ha sido aceptado para ser un Tercer País “Seguro” sin tener una preparación y estructura adecuada para atenderlos por un tiempo indefinido que se puede ser hasta más de un año. Estamos viendo que muchas personas han sido deportadas, al ver lo tardado del proceso otras han decidido regresar a su país después de haber huido de situaciones peligrosas, otras deciden quedarse en México con una situación migratoria legal, la cual el gobierno de México no tiene claridad en este proceso de legalización. Muchos cubanos expresan que México es un mejor país para vivir y no Cuba.

Hace mes y medio han llegado en caravana alrededor de 1000 migrantes del propio México, huyendo de la inseguridad y violencia en sus estados de origen, mayormente Michoacán y Zacatecas. Las causas de esta situación son principalmente los carteles de narcotraficantes, extorsiones, secuestros, asesinatos. Los migrantes mexicanos han



rehusado ir a los albergues y se están quedando fuera alrededor de los 4 puentes de Juárez a Estados Unidos. Se ha tratado de proveer baños portátiles por los empresarios juarenses, tres comidas diarias por el Gobierno, atención médica por la Cruz Roja y algunas personas de la ciudad les llevan cosas básicas y ropa. Los migrantes mexicanos y los extranjeros están enfrentando el frente frío que está iniciando en nuestra localidad y se está esperando un clima invernal más severo, al que no están acostumbrados.

Después de varios meses de vivir el proceso migratorio se han dado cuenta de lo difícil e injusto que es el proceso. No todos desean contar su historia por miedo, les faltan documentos para probar su situación, han experimentado la situación de la separación criminal de padres e hijos e hijas, el grupo LGBT ha sido discriminado y marginado. Algunos nos dicen que van a desistir de irse a EU debido a Trump. En el albergue donde apoyamos hemos tratado de ayudarles a que sean más solidarios entre ellos. Los grupos de personas de diferentes culturas, origen, religiones se han podido ayudar emocionalmente en las crisis que están pasando. Se les ha llevado

ayuda legal, psicológica, terapias emocionales y masaje, medicina natural y acompañamiento de escucha.

El espíritu liberador de Jesús nos impulsa a solidarizarnos con este grupo de hermanas y hermanos que necesitan de un espacio seguro, libre de violencia donde ellos y las nuevas generaciones puedan lograr un desarrollo humano y justo. Sabemos que hay muchos grupos en EU luchando y trabajando para apoyar a nuestras hermanas y hermanos migrantes y están denunciado las injusticias sobre la migración en la frontera. Esta necesidad es de todas y todos. Ante el llamado Evangélico de Jesús estamos creando un espacio de apoyo binacional entre Michigan y Ciudad Juárez de Hermanas IHM, amigas de la congregación y personas activistas voluntarias para investigar, concretizar y responder a esta situación de crisis migratoria que afecta a nuestra casa común como lo recuerda el Papa Francisco. *“No hay dos crisis separadas, una ambiental y otra social, sino una sola y compleja crisis socio-ambiental”* (*Laudato Si’ 139*).

¿Dónde podremos encontrar la leche y miel que mana para un pueblo que sufre? ¿Que nos toca hacer para caminar con nuestras hermanas y hermanos migrantes? Reconocemos que somos todos y todas forasteros y caminantes en este mundo.

Hearts Without Borders/Mexico-United States Border We are all foreigners/migrants

Although the powers that be want to build physical or imaginary walls against others, it is not possible to stop the flow of human mobility. In the Bible, we are told the story of a nomadic people in search of the promised land where milk and honey flow. Every human being wants to live a better life, in peace and with justice and dignity. At present, we have experienced a migratory phenomenon from Central America and other countries toward the northern border of Mexico with the desire to enter the United States. In our mission as IHM Sisters in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, we are living this experience of receiving waves of human beings that for many years had not been seen in this magnitude.

There is a new reality of a critical migratory situation that occurred since October 2018 by caravans of thousands of people: Cubans, Guatemaltecs, Hondureños, Salvadoreños, Colombians, Haitians, etc. They initially crossed the Suchiate River as a wave of human beings mirroring the biblical people crossing the Jordan River. Touching land in Tapachula, Chiapas, many of them arrived without documents and without requesting a migratory permit in Mexico. Not having adequate statistics on the presence of migrants does not allow us to prove the situation is a “migration crisis,” but this is what is experienced throughout the border.

As migrants, every time we move from one place to another we are leaving part of our lives, traditions, language, beliefs and culture. In this trajectory of mobility, many migrants have suffered rejection, marginalization, violence, kidnapping, human trafficking, extortion, etc. The majority arrive with fear, traumatized, children, youth and adults, all with the desire to cross into the U.S., wishing for a safe space in

which they can live with their families and not be damaged by the gangs, narcos, military and the political system of oppressive governments without freedom of expression. They see the U.S. as the country that could support, understand and offer them a more dignified life than they are living in their places of origin.



In Ciudad Juarez, many not-very accurate statistics are offered by the Immigrant Assistance Center (now converted to the Center for Migrants). It is estimated that in Juarez, there are about 6,000 to 7,000 migrants with different situations and immigration status. Some are waiting to be attended by Customs and Migration "Protection" (CBP); others have already had one to three

appointments with a judge and have been returned to Mexico by the Protocol of "Protection" for Migrants (MPP) as their request is processed for asylum. Many Mexicans see it as shameful that their country has been accepted to be a "safe" third country without having adequate preparation and structure to serve the migrants for an indefinite period that can be more than a year. We are seeing that many have been deported; others seeing the delay of the process have decided to return to their own countries after fleeing from dangerous situations; others are deciding to stay in Mexico with a legal immigration situation, though the Mexican government is not clear about this legalization process. Many Cubans express that Mexico is a better country to live in than Cuba.

A month and a half ago, about 1,000 Mexican migrants arrived in caravans, fleeing from insecurity and violence, mostly from Michoacán and Zacatecas. The causes of this situation are the drug cartels, extortions, kidnappings and murders. Mexican migrants have refused to go to shelters and are staying outdoors around the four bridges of Juarez to the U.S. Some businesspeople of Juarez have provided portable toilets, three daily meals by the government, medical attention by the Red Cross; some people in the city are bringing them basic things and clothes. Mexican migrants and those of other countries are facing the cold front that is starting to be felt in our town and a more severe winter is expected, which they are not accustomed to.

After several months of living the immigration process, many have realized how difficult and unfair the process is. Not everyone wants to tell their story out of fear; they lack documents to prove their situation; they have experienced the criminal situation of separation of parents and sons and daughters. The LGBT group has been discriminated against and marginalized, and some tell us that they are going to give up going to the U.S. because of the current administration. In the shelter where

we are accompanying migrants, we have tried to help them become more supportive of each other. Among the groups of people from different cultures, backgrounds and religions, they have been able to help each other emotionally in the crises they are experiencing. We have brought them legal and psychological help, emotional therapies and massage, natural medicine and listening accompaniment.

The liberating spirit of Jesus urges us to show solidarity with this group of sisters and brothers who need a safe space free of violence, where they and new generations can achieve a just human development. We know that there are many groups in the U.S. fighting and working to support our migrant sisters and brothers and are denouncing the injustices around border migration. This need belongs to everyone. Responding to the evangelical call of Jesus, we are creating a bi-national support space between Michigan and Juarez of IHM Sisters, friends of the congregation and volunteer activists to investigate, concretize and respond to this situation of migratory crisis that affects our common home as Pope Francis reminds us. *"There are not two separate crises, one environmental and one social, but only one and complex socio-environmental crisis"* (*Laudato Si'* 139).

Where can we find the milk and honey that flow for a people who suffer? What do we need to do to accompany our migrant sisters and brothers? We recognize ourselves as all migrants and pilgrims in this world.

*Carmen Armenta Lara, IHM, Maria Antonia Aranda Diaz, IHM,
and Maureen Kelly, IHM*



Peg O'Shea, IHM, Sue Rakoczy, IHM, and friends at the climate strike in Howick, South Africa

HIV group continues to grow



A support group for HIV/AIDS continues in Tumbleweed, South Africa, on a monthly basis with 70+ participants. Although HIV is not viewed as the scourge that it once was, many people are still living with fear of rejection and stigma. The staff of St. Joseph Preschool provide encouragement, education, basic health checks, tea and a full meal to give hope to participants who live in a very poor and dangerous area. Sadly, the group could easily grow to 700+ but we lack more dedicated volunteers and a place to meet. Small seeds grow into trees! God bless the IHM Aids Committee and Dignity Detroit for their support. Roshni Singh, Pratish Singh and Mavis Cele who assist the support group are pictured on the left.

Peg O'Shea, IHM



A word of gratitude to friends and former staff in Chicago of Sister Ann Aseltyne, IHM, for their generous donation to St. Joseph Preschool, Howick, South Africa. Our children are grateful to Maria Powers, Ann Marie Perry (Nemcok) and Carolyn Sullivan.

Peg O'Shea, IHM

Gender-based violence (GBV) escalates in South Africa

The tragic stories flow like water over a dam, never stopping, filling the papers, the TV news and online stories. A university student is stabbed to death as she and her friends walk home from an evening job; a woman dies when her partner pours gasoline on her and lights it – because she refused to clean his room; a post office employee rapes and murders a university student who came to collect a package. South Africa's rate of femicide is five times the world average.

Articles analyze the tragedies: toxic masculinity is certainly a chief cause – men must assert themselves at all times and a woman is a convenient object to assault, rape and murder. South Africa is a very violent society and people have a low tolerance for frustration. If a woman is “in the way” of a man, she is in danger.

In early August, the Ujamaa Center of the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal sponsored three days of seminars and protests on GBV. I attended some of the activities. We wore purple T-shirts with various slogans. I was very struck by the brave women whose shirt said “rape survivor.” Some of these women told their heart-stopping stories in a panel.

Aug. 7 was a day of silent protest. Because I was teaching that day, I couldn't fully participate but did attend the closing prayer service. In the morning, participants had their mouths taped shut which was a powerful symbol of how all the words about GBV have not stopped it. Those who participated thus fasted from food and water until about 4 p.m. when a closing prayer service was held. People removed the tape from their mouths and in small circles shared their stories of the day and their protest plans for the future.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for life sentences without parole for rape and femicide. Recently a man in his early 20s was given a life sentence for raping a 7-year old girl in a restaurant bathroom. Cry the beloved country!

Sue Rakoczy, IHM

A litany for South Africa

Lord, we are told by many pundits that South Africa is at its lowest ebb, politically, legally, morally and spiritually. In humility, we come before you and confess our failures as citizens of South Africa.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We lift to you all the women in our country who are disadvantaged or threatened with rape or death.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for our farmers who are attacked or killed on a regular basis.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for the children of our land who are threatened with abduction, rape and murder.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for our health system that is rapidly collapsing.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for all schools and universities that are invaded by violence, ignorance and poor teaching.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for our municipalities that are in disarray.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray that the Church in South Africa will preach the Gospel truth to the nation and lead the way towards sound doctrine, morality and ethics.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

We pray for our president and his cabinet. Give them the wisdom and discernment needed to steer this country in the way of justice, kindness, righteousness, love and humility.

Response: Kyrie, Kyrie, eleison.

(Adapted from a Taizé Prayer Service, Hilton, South Africa)

Overseas Update Format

The *Overseas Update* is now available only in a digital format on the IHM website and via email to South African friends. Doing our share to save the trees!

Thanks to

all those who pray for our ministries and contribute in various ways to them, to Mika Kotanova for her work on the layout and to Mika and Dorothy Diederichs, IHM, who coordinate the distribution of the *Overseas Update*.

The Next Issue

will be published in April 2020. Please send any news and articles to Sue Rakoczy, IHM (srakoczy@sjti.ac.za) by April 1, 2020. Thank you.