

Mercy Border Immersion Experience **May 8-13, 2022, El Paso, TX and Juarez, MX**

The Sisters of Mercy's **Chapter 2017 Recommitment: Called to New Consciousness** reaffirmed the commitment to *"act in solidarity"* with immigrants and refugees, and to *"continue our transformation toward greater integrity of word and deed."*

In light of this call, and in response to the suffering caused by restrictions being placed on asylum seekers at the US-Mexico border, as well as the increased anti-immigrant sentiment, violence and racial hatred directed at immigrants, a delegation to the US-Mexico border is being organized by Mercy's Justice Team in collaboration with the Columban Mission Center in El Paso, Texas.

Purpose of trip: The immersion delegation will be educational and include time for reflection. **Participants will be expected to return to their ministries and their Communities to help raise awareness about immigration and its root causes, as well as using their experience to engage in advocacy and educating others.** Together we will:

- Deepen understanding of the current situation at the US-Mexico border (e.g., detention and deportation; obstacles to asylum; impacts of the "Remain in Mexico" program, etc.) and how Church and humanitarian groups are responding.
- Witness conditions on the Mexico side (Juarez) and learn about the desperation driving people to risk the journey.
- Learn about how US policies have contributed to conditions of violence and poverty from which people are fleeing.
- Reflect on how to make these realities known more in Mercy and in the US. We will strategize on ways to raise consciousness and bring greater depth to the polarizing public discourse on immigration: helping shift the conversation to one of unity and compassion, rather than division, racism and hatred (Mercy's Communication staff can provide support for writing reflections and doing media interviews.)

Logistics

- **Covid 19 protocols:** All participants **MUST be fully vaccinated** and show proof of vaccination. Trip organizers will monitor covid levels, follow CDC recommendations for masking, and work with local host organizations on testing and safety requirements. All plans are subject to change based on developments with COVID 19.
- **Airport:** El Paso, TX (travel dates: May 8 & 13). Lodging, dorm style, at the Columban Mission Center.
- **Cost:** \$110/person per day to cover program, food, van, and housing, in addition to arranging your own travel to/from El Paso. Interested participants may want to ask your respective Mercy Ministries/Communities to sponsor your participation. Let us know if you need fundraising ideas.
- **Itinerary** (proposed): meetings with border ministries, border patrol officers, and Church and humanitarian groups serving immigrants. We will cross into Juarez, MX for one day to meet with Mercy and church leaders there (passport needed). If you do not currently have a valid passport, please reach out to Jean or Brother Ryan as indicated below as we *may* be able to accommodate.

Application form <https://tinyurl.com/mercybordertrip>. **Applications due by April 4, 2022** For more information, contact: Jean Stokan at jstokan@sistersofmercy.org or Brother Ryan Roberts at rroberts@sistersofmercy.org.