

## **Dignity Mission Update**

### **March 12, 2025**

According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), southwest land “border encounters” have continued to fall sharply since December 2023. Encounter data, in the words of CBP, includes apprehensions, inadmissibles, and expulsions. They define “inadmissibles” as those individuals presenting themselves to seek humanitarian protection under our laws. Since January 20, 2025, the asylum application system has been turned off and all individuals legally seeking asylum at official ports of entry have been turned away. Consequently, the number of asylum seekers in the migrant shelters we support in El Paso have dwindled and in many cases are at zero. Not sure why thousands of active-duty military personnel from bases in New York, Kentucky, Colorado, North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington have been deployed within the last six weeks to the U.S. southern border if border encounters have fallen nearly 80% over the past 14 months.

The number of people in migrant shelters on the other side of the border on the other hand is slowly increasing. We believe there may be two reasons for that—people are still fleeing north trying to escape life-threatening situations in their home countries and yet others are being deported back into Mexico from the United States. We gained some insight into the demographics of Mexico’s migrant shelter population recently when we attended a presentation hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Social Justice Foundation and the Latin American Relief Fund in San Miguel de Allende. We were privileged to hear Pastor Ignacio Martinez Ramirez, the director of Abba House, a migrant shelter in Celaya, Mexico. Abba House has provided food, shelter, clothing, and medical and legal services to more than 150,000 immigrants and refugees from across the world. Celaya is in the Mexican state of Guanajuato, approximately 1,000 miles south of El Paso and straddles a major north/south rail line that many migrants use on their journeys north. Pastor Ignacio described what they are seeing today along this migration route. In short, despite the increased restrictions imposed by the United States and Mexico, people are still on the move. Not the numbers seen two years ago, but nonetheless there are still people, including young families

with small children fleeing dangerous conditions in their home countries, who are traveling north through Mexico towards the U.S. Pastor Ignacio's experience and description of the migrant population in Celaya mirror what we are currently seeing in Ciudad Juárez. There are basically three different categories of migrants in Mexican shelters today—those who have chosen to stay and wait in the hope that our government will lift the ban on applying for asylum; those who are taking steps to find a job and apply for residency in Mexico; and then those who have given up hope and are preparing to return home in spite of the dangers they face there.

As we stated in the February Dignity Mission Update, the situation along the U.S./Mexico border is not too much unlike it was in 2020 and as the Dignity Mission was prepared to do then, it is prepared with your support to do now, i.e. whatever we can to bring hope and a sense of dignity to those turned back, deported, and maligned by governments. Donating cash or shipping any of the items on our wish list directly to Dr. Moya in El Paso can help bring a sense of hope to some of the world's most marginalized people. Steps to do that take place almost everyday thanks to the generosity of companies, organizations, and individuals like you across the country.

Special thank you to a linen supply company in Albuquerque who donated 502 blankets to the Dignity Mission and to the volunteers who transported all of them last week to El Paso for distribution to shelters in Juárez. An additional thank you to another company, Penzeys Spices from Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, who donated and shipped a pallet of Hug Blankets to El Paso for the hundreds of homeless migrant children along the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez border. Once again, we are grateful for the generous spirit of the organization, Albuquerque Asylum Seeker Welcome, who filled a ¾-ton pickup and an SUV with all sorts of critical supplies we will haul to the border at the end of this month. A thank-you note also to those members and friends of Las Placitas Presbyterian Church who have been bringing in bags of beans and rice over the past months for delivery to the migrant shelters along the border. On behalf of those the Dignity Mission serves we wish to express the deepest gratitude to all of you who donate your time, money, and

goods to help lift up our brothers and sisters, who like us seek security and a better life for their families. (We have attached some pictures of some of the volunteers who assisted with last month's shipment and of some of the grateful recipients of your generosity.)

Those of you locally are welcome to join us at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church this Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 AM to view a documentary film entitled *Dignity*: A film that takes a raw look into the hardships of migrant refugees at the US/Mexico border and the band of volunteers who are trying to bring them hope.

Raising cash to purchase whatever items the migrant shelter directors need most urgently at any given time is a priority. That historically has been food, underwear, powdered milk, baby formula, and diapers. Purchasing products in bulk used in assembling Dignity Kits, the hallmark of the Dignity Mission, of course remains our number one priority. Monetary donations can be made in one of two ways:

1. A check written to Las Placitas Presbyterian Church with Dignity Mission noted in the memo line and mailed to Las Placitas Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 768, Placitas, NM 87043.
2. On-line giving by going to [www.lasplacitaschurch.org](http://www.lasplacitaschurch.org). Click on "More" in the top right-hand corner of the Home Page, click on "GIVE" on the drop-down menu, click on "CLICK HERE TO GIVE", click on the box next to Dignity Mission on the Donation page, enter an amount, frequency and start date, and click on "Continue." Complete the form and submit.

If you prefer you can purchase any of the items found on our Wish List at

[https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3A8N584B37L61?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3A8N584B37L61?ref=wl_share)

and ship directly to Dr. Eva Moya at the following address:

Dignity Mission  
c/o Dr. Eva Moya

6520 La Cadena Dr.  
El Paso, TX 79912

Blessings,  
Jack & Cheryl

