



In Heated Political Season, Religious Sisters Urge Empathy on Immigration

~ by Rhina Guidos, National Catholic Reporter

As immigration becomes a hot-button topic in the upcoming U.S. presidential election, women religious and other Catholics urge a compassionate Christian response toward people fleeing perilous situations in record breaking numbers.

“If we changed what was being preached at our pulpits and talked about a God who migrates towards us, we’d have a different understanding of what people on the move, migrants, are about,” said Sr. Lisa Buscher, of the Society of the Sacred Heart, in a January 8th interview with the Global Sisters Report (GSR).

In December, authorities documented more than 225,000 migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border, a record for monthly encounters. It was not a surprise since the government had released figures two months earlier of more than 2.4 million apprehensions at the southern border in the 2023 fiscal year which ended in September.

Some [Republican](#) state leaders have transported migrants from border cities to localities run by Democrats, spurring politicians on both sides of the aisle urging the federal government to do something to stop the flow. Some have publicly voiced their frustrations, and Republican and Democrats in the Senate are working together on an [agreement](#): Their deal would grant the Biden's administration request for money for Ukraine if it agrees to limit a temporary status



Sr. Lisa Buscher, of the Society of the Sacred Heart, shares candy with the children at a migrant shelter in Mexicali, Mexico. Buscher, who works with migrants and refugees in San Diego and border communities nearby, urges a compassionate view of migrants.

(GSR photo/Rhina Guidos)

called [humanitarian parole](#), which has allowed a large number of migrants — including from Ukraine and Nicaragua — to stay in the United States.

For women religious like Sr. Buscher, who work with migrants and refugees in the San Diego area, it's hard to understand the sentiments.

Sr. Buscher urged people to look more critically at global migration. Conflicts such as Russia's war against Ukraine; conflicts in place such as continental Africa; economic and political conditions in Latin America; and climate change and hunger, she said, have spurred a global flow of people with the U.S. one of many destinations for migrants.

**"For I was a
foreigner and you
welcomed me"**

The Gospel of Matthew

"These are ordinary
people in extraordinary
circumstances. It could
be any one of us."

~ Sr. Lisa Buscher

"These are ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. It could be any one of us," she said.

In the Catholic tradition, she said, the Holy Family had to deal with similar challenges as Joseph and Mary fled their homeland to protect the baby Jesus from being killed by King Herod.

Sr. Maria de los Dolores Palencia Gomez, of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Lyon, who works with migrants in Mexico, said it's hard to know what she'd say to U.S. politicians who boast about their Christianity yet "use" anti-immigrant sentiment to attract voters.

"I don't think it's possible, as Catholics, to feel exempt from reaching out to a brother or sister. It's enough to look at [the Gospel of] [Matthew](#), which clearly tells us: you clothed me, I was a foreigner and you welcomed me," Palencia told GSR during a press conference in Bogotá, Colombia Nov. 24.

To read the full account, please click [here](#)

Editor's note: *Global Sisters Report launches a new series, "Welcoming the Stranger," which takes a closer look at women religious working with immigrants and migrants. The series will feature sisters and organizations networking to better serve those crossing borders, global migration trends and the topic of immigration in the upcoming U.S. presidential election.*

CLMs Gather to Pray for Peace



The Cabrini Lay Missionaries (CLMs) held a prayer service to pray for peace for the people in Ecuador and Nicaragua. We met via Zoom and had people join us from Italy, Nicaragua and many different states in the USA. The prayer service was offered in both English and Spanish.

We have several Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus living in Nicaragua as well as a CLM. In addition, one our CLMs has family members residing there. We have a CLM who is from Ecuador and has family there, as well. There are also several friends of the CLMs who have family members in Ecuador.

We prayed together using scripture and song. The songs were very powerful as we listened to the lyrics asking God to bring peace and light into our broken world. The petitions were very moving as we saw the names of the MSCs and the CLM living in Nicaragua as well as the names of the CLMs who have family living in these countries.



CLMs joined together via Zoom to pray for peace, particularly in Ecuador and Nicaragua, where we have MSCs and CLMs and their families.



We continue to pray for peace in these countries as well as for peace around the world.

~ submitted by Lorraine Campanelli, CLM Director

Cabrini High School Students Attend March for Life 2024



Ten students along with staff members from Cabrini High School in New Orleans recently attended the March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Please read and enjoy some of their reflections on the trip:

Elizabeth LeBlanc, Cabrini High School, Pro-Life Club Moderator

As part of the Archdiocese of New Orleans annual Youth Pilgrimage to the March for Life, ten students from Cabrini High School were part of approximately 500 high school students that journeyed on a 22-hour bus trip to attend the annual March for Life in Washington D.C. On January 19th after Mass celebrated by Archbishop Aymond of New Orleans, we joined tens of thousands of



In addition to participating in the March for Life, the CHS students were given a tour of the U.S. Capitol, met with the Speaker of the House, and toured the Smithsonian Museums. The students posed for a photo on the National Mall with the Washington Monument in the background.

others to march to Capitol Hill giving witness to the sanctity of human life. In addition to the March, the students enjoyed a private tour of the Capitol Building and got to meet the Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, who is from Louisiana. They

were also able to visit various Smithsonian Museums and tour the breathtaking Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, including a viewing of the statue of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, our patron who spent her life serving some of the most vulnerable of society. Ministry nights were held every night with various faith witness talks, worship music, Eucharistic Adoration, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Olivia Montecino (12th Grade):

“On the March for Life, I got to stand up for what I believe in along with so many other teens. I got to see Washington DC, meet girls from other schools, and grow closer to God. One of my favorite things about the trip was the ministry nights. It was really cool to see so many teens in one place strengthening their relationship with God through worship and adoration. It was also amazing to see how many people go out to March for Life, even when it did not stop snowing all day. I loved every minute of this trip, and I am so grateful that I got to go on it.”



A highlight of the trip was touring the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception where they were able to view the beautiful sculpture of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini.

Gianna Jackson (9th Grade):



“I had so many favorite parts of the trip! I loved getting to know the Archdiocese of New Orleans seminarians more and growing closer to my Cabrini classmates that accompanied me on the trip. I really enjoyed the ministry nights, and when the Sisters of Life told all their stories about how they have helped women choose life and turn away from abortion. It was so awesome to get to know more pro-life people and to be surrounded by teenagers who are so passionate about defending human life.”

~ submitted by John Smestad, Campus Minister, Cabrini High School

Distinguished Honors at Cabrini of Westchester



Karen Lipson, Executive Vice President of LeadingAge, NY presents the 2023 Employee of Distinction Award to Prit Patel, Physical Therapist at Cabrini of Westchester.

Priteshkumar (Prit) Patel, Physical Therapist at Cabrini of Westchester, was presented with the 2023 Employee of Distinction Award from LeadingAge New York, part of a national association of 5,500 not-for-profit organizations. Mr. Patel graciously accepted the award from Karen Lipson, Executive Vice President of LeadingAge, on January 11, 2024 at a celebration held in his honor. This prestigious award is given to an employee who excels in their profession and who has served with distinction and made significant contributions to the betterment of services for the aged and infirmed.

While presenting the award, Ms. Lipson stated “I’m very pleased to present this award to Prit. I read the nominations for all the candidates and I was so moved by the letters of support recognizing Prit that I wanted to meet him in person and offer my sincere congratulations to him. I’m very inspired by your work, Prit, and I’m happy to be here.”

In his nomination letter, David Leyden, Director of Rehabilitation wrote the following: “Prit is one of the most talented physical therapists and human beings I have ever had the privilege of working with. His technical skills and competency as a therapist are outstanding and can only be matched by his unique vision and ability to see past any barriers or challenges a patient may present. He offers them hope and a chance at a better life than they are living. Prit meets his patients at their level and offers the just-right challenge every step of the way.”

Account continues on next page.



Bonita Burke, Vice President of Operations and Administrator (I.) and Sr. Arlene Van Dusen, MSC, Cabrini of Westchester Trustee, congratulate Prit on a well-deserved honor.

At the reception, Bonita Burke, Vice President of Operations and Administrator stated, “Prit, you are loved by all and not a day goes by that I don’t receive positive feedback about you! You are a true inspiration!” ~ submitted by Susan Herceg, Cabrini of Westchester



Surrounded by his colleagues, Prit receives the congratulations and good wishes of his co-workers in the Cabrini of Westchester Rehabilitation Department.

Congratulations, Prit, on your well-deserved recognition!

Prayer Requests

Fran Harkness and her husband

Fran Harkness, a former staff member of Cabrini University, and her husband, were in a serious car accident recently. Both needed to be hospitalized. Your prayers are requested for their speedy recovery; they would be most grateful.

Prayers for those undergoing treatment

An employee of Cabrini University asks for prayers for her mother and also for her friend. Both of these people are undergoing cancer treatments.

World Day for Consecrated Life

February 2nd

The World Day for Consecrated Life will be celebrated in the Church on Friday, February 2, 2024 and in parishes over the weekend of February 3-4, 2024. Please pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life, and be sure to thank them on their special day. More on this in next week’s Update.