



DIAKONIA Overcoming Violence Exchange - DOVE

I was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me

October 14-19, 2024 travel October 14 & 19

La Posada Providencia

30094 Marydale Rd.

San Benito, Texas, 78586

³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these siblings of mine, you did it to me.’ Matthew 25:35-39

DOVE 2024 Statement

We believe that all people are beloved children of God and therefore should be treated with respect and dignity. We also recognize that systems of power and greed continue to marginalize, malign, oppress, and enact violence upon vulnerable people, particularly people on the move. Because of this, it is imperative that we, as ministers of the Diaconate, use our hands, feet and voices to work on behalf of justice and humane treatment of our migrant siblings.

*Recognizing that not all people understand the various and intersecting factors related to migration, we must **educate** ourselves and others to ensure accurate information is relayed regarding the realities migrants from all countries face. Using our **prophetic voice**, we must **advocate** for holistic and compassionate immigration reform so that all people have the opportunity to seek a life free from violence, climate devastation, poverty, and warfare. We recognize that this work cannot be accomplished on our own and, for the most positive impact to be made, we must work together in partnership.*

Through prayer, education and action, we will seek to live Matthew 25 and ensure our migrant siblings are cherished and welcomed, for they are beloved.

In love of our neighbor,

Simone Engel Voigt

Joelle Alfred

Ann Blane

Carla Vilma Jandrey

Tene Joseph

Cindy Andrade Johnson

Dionata Rodrigues de Oliveira

Greta St. Hill

Noreen Stevens

Lynda Dickson

Dottie Almoney

Vicki McPhee

Erin Brown

We give thanks for the gracious hospitality we received from La Posada Providencia as we gathered for DOVE in 2024. Coming together from across the DOTAC region, we brought our own contextual experiences of immigration, faith practices and knowledge of our country's impacting policies and procedures. The diversity of our knowledge, wisdom, experiences, practices, and beliefs created a healthy foundation from which to listen, learn and act as we gathered at La Posada.

La Posada Providencia is an emergency shelter for men, women, and families who have fled to the United States due to political oppression, natural disaster, and other life-threatening actions in their native countries. <https://lppshelter.org>

While at La Posada, we had the opportunity to share meals and engage in projects and volunteer opportunities with the guests and staff. With new housing for the migrants, we were housed at La Posada's old migrant residence house that is now used for guests. The home setting provided a space for worship and prayer and time to simply be with each other as we grew in understanding of one another's contexts, drew from one another's wisdom and experience, and shared stories. As a group, we agreed the space, hospitality, and individual commitment to actively engage in the experience, created a group dynamic which grew community and openness of heart and mind to learn truth.

Prayer and Bible Study: While we were together, each region led a Bible Study and prayers as we stepped into the day and at the close. This provided for a time to Center, listen, and reflect. These provided holy time for the group – learning more about the region's immigration and love of neighbor. The similarities in the push and pull of immigration were revealed as our hearts were broken open by Christ's love and hope.

We began our week with a hand washing and blessing led by Carla, Dionata, and Simone, and concluded with Communion led by Ann and Dionata. Beautiful, holy times that held the anticipated and stirred emotions of the week.

Daily Schedule, Learning, Listening:

Attached you will find our daily schedule. Here you will find the site visits and speakers that provided critical contextual teaching and an invitation to consider our own contexts as our hearts were broken open to the impact of immigration, migrant stories, and the strength of Christ's love and hope shared through hands and voices.

With a Prophetic Voice: Our week was filled with rich resources – people, books, studies, facts, research, and organizations. Our group will gather these resources and share them with DOTAC, as we also invite DOTAC to **learn** with us, build-up a working immigrant **network** across DOTAC – and we hope DIAKONIA, **pray** and **act** with a prophetic voice so all may flourish.

We share our Thanks: for the hosts, guests, hands, feet, and voices, that welcomed us, taught us to listen for truth weaving through story, fact, and news, and open our hearts and minds to the impact of immigration on our neighbors.

Cindy Andrade Johnson
Ann Blane
Sisters of Divine Providence, Nora and Theresa
Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley – Sister Norma Pimentel
Susan Helms
Border Patrol

Good Neighbor Settlement House and Welcome Center
Carlos Rojas Salazar, Executive Director, Action Réfugiés Montréal
Raed AbuJries, Program Manager for Education and Communications for AMMPARO
Kathleen Fugate Laborde
Texas Impact
American Civil Liberties Union
Sarah Towle
Mike Johnson

Respectfully submitted,
Noreen Stevens

10/2024