

Arkansas CATHOLIC

THE DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

Volume 112 | Number 25

www.arkansas-catholic.org

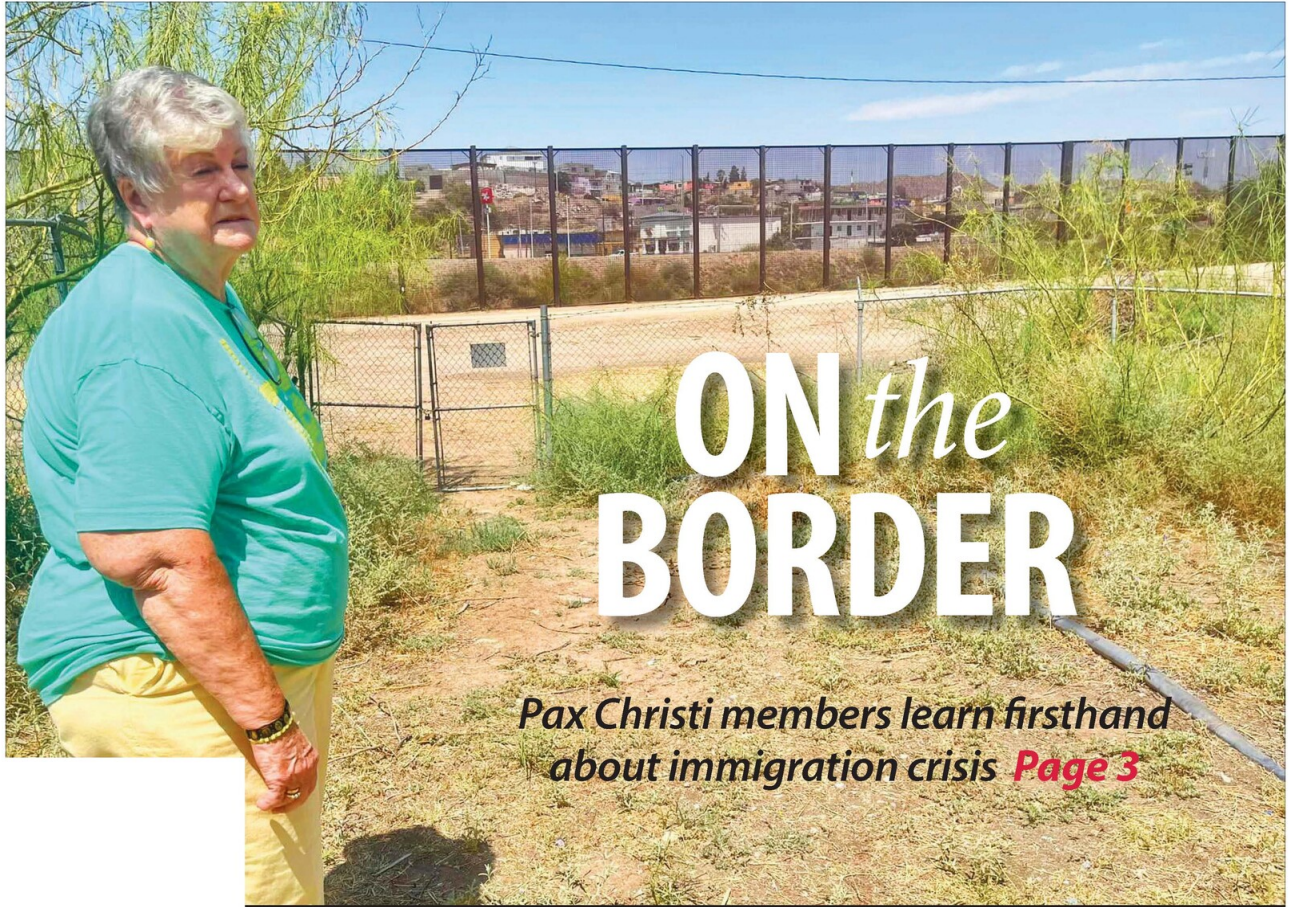
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**Web designer can refuse
to provide services for
same-sex marriages**

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*Russia targets
Ukrainian civilians near
Catholic university*

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ON *the* BORDER

*Pax Christi members learn firsthand
about immigration crisis* **PAGE 3**

Vatican cataloging names of modern martyrs who died for faith

In preparation for the holy year in 2025, the Vatican is continuing its search for modern-day witnesses of the faith, including non-Catholic Christians. What can we learn about the stories of these martyrs?

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MISSIONARIES ON THE MOVE

Pax Christi volunteers see reality on Texas-Mexico border

By Nicholas Tarini

Special to Arkansas Catholic

Immigration has come to the forefront of political debate in recent years, but one Little Rock group made it their mission to volunteer at the border and learn firsthand just what is going on there.

Sherry Simon, a parishioner of Christ the King in Little Rock, led the local chapter of Pax Christi to El Paso for six days at the end of June. They focused their efforts on Sacred Heart Parish in El Paso, where there is an immigrant center called Casa del Sagrado Corazón. Center director Michael Debruhl helped the Pax Christi group with organization and volunteering.

While Pax Christi has done mission trips before, they had never been to the border.

"The main focus was to volunteer every day," Simon said. "We fed people, we took leftover food and prepared food to be donated out to the streets and to the immigrants, we helped organize and man the clothing closet that they have there, and we did a lot of activities with the kids. The refugee center is this big gym that they converted, so the kids have really nothing to do and so we played



Courtesy Pax Christi Little Rock

Immigration attorneys (right) from Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso speak to Pax Christi members about immigration June 24.

different games with them."

One of the main ways in which Pax Christi immersed themselves in what was happening was at Abara, a nonprofit immigration

organization.

"They're going to have a meditation garden and lead immersion classes there to help people learn about the border to get rid

of the stereotypes that all these immigrants are murderers coming over with drugs," Simon said. "Most of these folks have families, so they're going to help promote

the truth. For us, it was a combination of doing volunteer work and educating ourselves because our goal was to bring back information to Little Rock, Arkansas, about what's going on over there."

A Catholic Charities of Arkansas employee, Sister Iliana Aponte, DC, who had volunteered in El Paso in 2019, also joined the six-member group.

"When I was there before, I was helping people try to connect with a family," Sister Iliana said. "I would help people to get into the airport to connect with their family. This time, it was completely different. I was helping serve food, and I was with the children most of the time, dancing with them. I was trying to bring hope to the people because of the way that they arrived here. It's not easy to try to get into their new home or their new life. What I tried to do was give hope to the people and be with them and support them."

Pax Christi members also donated undergarments, socks, clothes, sunglasses and lip balm for the Sacred Heart Church shelter. The donations included 30 boxes, including 70 T-shirts donated by the Miracles for Mary

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Church to honor modern-day Christians who died for the faith

'Witnesses of the faith' will be added to catalog of names

By Carol Glatz

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — When St. John Paul II initiated preparations for the Holy Year 2000, he believed "the Church in every corner of the earth must remain anchored in the testimony of the martyrs and jealously guard their memory" in order to journey with faith, hope and confidence into the third millennium.

Martyrs "have proclaimed the Gospel by giving their lives for love," reflecting Christ's words on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," the pope wrote in his 1998 bull officially proclaiming the jubilee.

To better recognize, honor and offer as inspiration the martyrs of the 20th century, St. John Paul established a special Vatican jubilee Commission for New Martyrs in 1996 to collect the names and stories of the latest witnesses of faith and charity.

The committee presented St. John Paul with eight volumes con-

taining more than 13,400 names of men and women who gave their lives for Christ or in the service of the Gospel from Jan. 1, 1900 through 1999.

In view of the upcoming jubilee of 2025, Pope Francis wants to continue this historical research, starting with today's "witnesses of the faith" of the 21st century. With a letter published July 5, he has established a new "Commission of the New Martyrs — Witnesses of the Faith" to draw up a new catalog of names.

"In a world where at times it seems that evil prevails, I am certain that the drafting of this catalog, also in the context of the now imminent jubilee, will help believers to read our times too in the paschal light, drawing from the treasury of such generous faithfulness to Christ the reasons for life and goodness," he wrote.

Much of what Pope Francis has created with the new initiative reflects the same project of his predecessor: producing as vast and broad a survey as possible with the help of the universal Church; including non-Catholic Christians who died to reflect what Pope Francis calls "the ecumenism of the blood" and St. John Paul called the "ecumenism of suffering";



CNS photo/courtesy Congregation of the Sisters of the Poor

Sister Annelvira Ossoli (left, in habit) is seen in Kinshasa, Congo, in 1985. She was among six members of her congregation who died of Ebola while caring for others suffering from the virus in Kikwit, Congo, in 1995.

and gathering representatives of churches and Christian communities from all over the world with the pope at Rome's Colosseum to commemorate these "new martyrs."

What is different is the new commission won't be temporary, but will now be part of the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, said

Father Boguslaw Turek, undersecretary of the dicastery.

The commission's first task for the Holy Year 2025 "is just the starting point" that will join the work done by the old commission and continue its work well into the future, he told Catholic News Service July 5.

"It's not a catalog of terrible events in the past, but of hope that leads to better horizons" today and tomorrow, said the priest of the Congregation of St. Michael the Archangel.

Something that might resurface, however, is the same confusion or disagreement over the term "new martyrs."

In fact, back in 2000, then-Archbishop José Saraiva Martins, the prefect of the then-Congregation for Sainthood Causes said, for the Catholic Church, the term martyr "in the proper, canonical sense," is for someone who died for Christ or for his Church and has already been beatified or canonized.

The archbishop said "witness of the faith" was preferred for Catholics whose beatification process has not been completed or for other Christians who were killed because of their faith or promotion of Christian values.

Pope Francis said in his letter the new commission "is not intended to establish new criteria for the canonical ascertainment of martyrdom, but to continue the survey already underway of those who, to this day, continue to be killed simply because they are Christians."

Texas border

Continued from page 3

Foundation, another Little Rock group. Mount St. Mary Academy let Pax Christi use the school's shuttle bus to help transport the volunteers and donations.

While Pax Christi was in El Paso, they realized that what was going on at the border doesn't affect only Texas.

"I think our most important contribution there was the first day we were in the center," Simon said. "Michael called us over, and he said, 'You're from Arkansas. We have this mom and two little kids, 8- and 4-year-old little boys who have arrived here from Venezuela. She was supposed to be able to get on a bus and go to her husband in Springdale, Arkansas, but she has no money. You're going back to Arkansas in five or six days, will you take them?' And I immediately said 'Yes, we will!'"

"When we were taking her here to Arkansas with us, she told her story of coming all the way up from Venezuela," Simon said. "It took a couple of hours, and she told the details of the trip and of some of the things she went through, how she was robbed and how she was threatened with her life. She went on a jungle path in Colombia and saw dead bodies and people dying. It was unbelievable what she went



The parish gym at Jesuit-run Sacred Heart Church in El Paso was turned into a shelter for immigrants called Casa del Sagrado Corazón in December 2022. Courtesy Pax Christi Little Rock

through to get her children there. And yet, she still had a smile on her face and was walking forward. But that was really hard for me, and I think it was hard for all of the other folks on our mission that were there listening to these words. It really brought home the importance of helping those who need a helping hand."

One of the things that had the biggest impact on Simon was getting to know some of the immi-

grants personally.

"What I learned is they simply simply want to be here to give their families a better chance in life," she said. "They're coming from a place whose government has imploded, and inflation is out of control. They can't possibly make enough money to eat. They are not safe, and they're simply coming here to give their families a better opportunity."

"And there's no country between

here and there. There's an economic discrepancy. They can make \$2 or \$3 an hour in most of those countries, and they can make \$12 to \$15 an hour here, and they can have a life. I learned that because what happens is they get here and they have an app where they have to wait to be called on their phone over in Mexico. They're waiting to be called if they get called, they can come in. They take between three and 500 a day. And they get

papers so they're legal, but then they have a court date that isn't set for a year or two out, and they can't work legally because they can't get a work permit for 150 days. So they get over here and they're in a real catch-22 because they probably have a family, they need food, they need shelter, but they can't work. So that's when they often sort of disappear in the shadows; they have to work so they work for cash or under the table."

Even though Simon saw firsthand the plight many of these immigrants are in, she also saw many people doing what they can to help.

"They are these beautiful people on both sides of the border who are working so hard to help these folks to have a better life," Simon said. "And these folks are saints. Michael Debruhl, Father Rafael Garcia (a Jesuit and pastor of Sacred Heart Church), and all these people, they are saints."

"Because they are basically following through with Christ's commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. They're doing it every day. The work that they're doing is really hard work, but these are really special people. They don't turn anyone away. It's very beautiful what they're doing down there at the border."

For more information on Pax Christi Little Rock, visit paxchristilitlro.org. To learn more about Casa del Sagrado Corazón, visit sacredheartelpaso.org.

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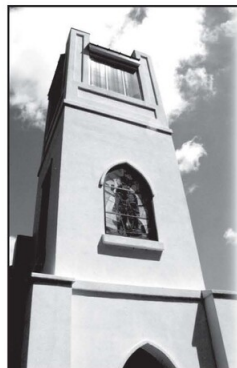
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