

September 2026

Report from the Field

The quarterly newsletter of the Pope Francis Center



Aug. 26 "Nuestras Calles" prayer vigil
Photo © Adrian Childress. Used with permission.



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What is Happening at the Pope Francis Center?

Legal Services Ministry:

We are working on growing our legal services to include full-scope representation for some of the people who come to request help. Our legal partners continue to provide 10-15 legal appointments a week, consulting cases, sharing know your rights information & referring people to other trusted partners. They also offer pro-se support for unrepresented cases while they continue to look for full-scope representation. This has included EAD applications, motions to reopen a case, and even motions to appeal.

Emotional and Spiritual Accompaniment Ministry

In June, we began offering Family Preparedness Planning sessions to parish families. In July, we piloted "Pan y Plática" support spaces for adults and young people who are experiencing emotional and mental distress due to the threat or experience of immigration enforcement. We have also continued our "Nuestras Calles" prayer vigils.

Resource Ministry:

We began regularly offering modest financial assistance to families impacted by the detention and/or deportation of a loved one. We continue to expand connections to community partners that have other housing, financial, and food supports for our community members.

An Increase in Ministry to Families Impacted by Detention

Since we opened, we have been contacted by over 25 families on behalf of loved ones who have been detained and/or deported by immigration enforcement. Countless individuals have been taken from our community, including a 19-year-old new father who had to hand his 1-month-old baby off to family during a scheduled ICE check-in. They detained him because he had missed a previous appointment due to being at the hospital for the birth of his baby.

Other places our community members have been detained include:

- At the park while getting fresh air or walking a dog
- On the way to work
- Taking their children to school
- Driving Uber/delivering groceries or hot meals
- At the Temecula Border Patrol checkpoint

In response to this continuation of injustice, the Pope Francis Center decided to start “Nuestras Calles,” pictured on the right, a monthly bilingual vigil series that brings impacted families, personal testimony, faith communities, public witness, and advocacy into neighborhoods across San Diego to make the human impact of ICE detention and immigration enforcement visible.



Community Member Testimony

Here are some words from a young mom who connected with the Pope Francis Center after the father of her child had been detained by ICE: "The Center helped us secure a legal consultation to better understand our case and learn that the date of our hearing had changed. That gave us great peace of mind. We also received emergency financial assistance, which was a huge help with groceries while we were looking for a place to live. Thanks to that support, we were able to get back on our feet and finally find an apartment!"

July 26 Community Food Sale

In July, we hosted a food sale & raffle to raise funds to give to families who have experienced state-imposed family separation. In total, we were able to fundraise \$11,446!

We could not have done this without our church community members who donated supplies, ingredients, and countless volunteer hours to prepare and serve all of the delicious food and drinks!

We also give thanks to RJ Chavez (@rj_laced_u2) and Eddy (@eddyduzit_) for their generous donation of six hours of haircuts and to our friends at Otra Noche Entertainment who brought a photobooth and facepainting!

We are so grateful for everyone who showed up to support the families in our community.



"Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not acheived once and for all; they have to be realized each day."

~ Pope Francis



One-Year Anniversary of FAITH Accompaniment Ministry



This August, we celebrate the one-year anniversary of FAITH Accompaniment Ministry. FAITH (olgsd.org/faith) is a project by the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego, Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church, and San Diego Organizing Project. It is an ecumenical ministry grounded in bearing witness, building trust, and providing pastoral care for individuals and families during their immigration court hearings and ICE check-ins.

This past year,

- 738 community members from over 17 religious traditions have been trained as FAITH volunteers
- Of these 738 volunteers, 162 are clergy from various faith traditions
- FAITH volunteers have fulfilled over 170 requests for accompaniment at the federal building

Team Member Highlight: Javier Diego Jacinto

Our newest staff member Javier has been volunteering with the Pope Francis Center since April, helping us develop our very own in-house Family Preparedness Planning program as well as organize our “Nuestras Calles” vigils!

Meet Javier:



"I am a DACAmended Oaxaqueño, educator, doctoral researcher, and community organizer whose work sits at the intersection of immigration and education. As a first-generation college graduate, my educational journey began at Southwestern College, where I earned an AA in Elementary Teacher Education. I later earned a BA in Applied Arts and Sciences in Education and an MA in Postsecondary Educational Leadership and Student Affairs from San Diego State University. I am currently pursuing a doctorate at Loyola Marymount University, where my research examines how immigration status, legal precarity, race, language, and institutional systems shape the experiences of undocumented and Oaxaqueño students. My scholarship and advocacy are grounded in both lived experience and years of work across K-12 schools, higher education, immigrant-serving programs, and grassroots community organizing.

At the Pope Francis Center, I have co-developed and help coordinate the Family Preparedness Initiative, a bilingual program that helps immigrant and mixed-status families prepare for the possibility of immigration related emergencies. I also help organize “Nuestras Calles,” a monthly bilingual vigil series that brings impacted families, personal testimony, faith communities, public witness, and advocacy into neighborhoods across San Diego to make the human impact of ICE detention and immigration enforcement visible."

Javier is frequently accompanied by his wife, Cathleen, and their two toddler daughters, who help us get some use out of the children's toys at the Pope Francis Center. We are so blessed to have Javier at the Pope Francis Center - he has helped us grow and deepen our ministry in such important ways!

Quarterly Recap in Images



Left: Our Founding Manager, Brinkley, speaking to a visiting group of 22 students from Texas on a justice-based immersion trip with Be The Neighbor

Right: At the end of July, staff of Pope Francis Center along with members of San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP) traveled to Chicago for the Catholics in Communion Convening to learn about Catholic organizing for immigrant solidarity & protecting the sanctity of democratic participation in elections.



Left: On August 17th, Brinkley spoke at a press conference held by San Diego County Board of Supervisors Chair Terra Lawson-Remer and Chair Pro Tem Paloma Aguirre ahead of their Board Letter prohibiting federal immigration enforcement agencies, including ICE, from utilizing County facilities for firearms training:

"Each day at the Pope Francis Center, we minister to immigrant families who are living with experiences of family separation because of ICE detention, deportation, and even death. People of all ages who are hard workers, who are kind and patient, who are churchgoing and generous, live with the terror that this administration has visited upon people who are not U.S. Citizens. The fear is not just of deportation; but that an encounter with this system could result in extreme bodily harm or death."



We Are Fundraising! Goal: \$80,000+

Help us expand our legal services! You can donate to the Pope Francis Center online using the QR code on the left. If you are mailing a check, please pay to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, 1770 Kearney Ave, San Diego, 92113. Thank you so much for your generosity!