



# Report from the Field

+1 619-214-6825

[olgsd.org/pope-francis-center](http://olgsd.org/pope-francis-center)

[bjohnson@olgsd.org](mailto:bjohnson@olgsd.org)

## May 2026

Welcome to our first edition of a quarterly newsletter, *Report from the Field*, where we share news and updates about the work of the Pope Francis Center. Pope Francis inspires us with his vision of "the church as a field hospital."

## Mission

The Pope Francis Center is an integral accompaniment ministry of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish (OLG) dedicated to addressing the urgent and changing needs of immigrants in the parish community and its surroundings. The Pope Francis Center will serve as a welcoming and supportive space that connects immigrant individuals and families with our three areas of ministry: essential resource navigation, spiritual and emotional accompaniment, and legal services. This center will embody Pope Francis' vision of a church that is welcoming, una iglesia en salida, a church of encounter.

## What is Happening at the Pope Francis Center?

Since opening in January 2026,

- 130 individuals and families have been supported with essential resource referrals or information
- 80 have also received a legal consultation, court/ICE check-in orientation, and/or Know Your Rights (KYR) materials

About half of these community members are parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe, with the other half finding us through FAITH referrals at the courthouse, the news, friends, or other non-profits.

In addition to legal consultations, we have connected people with...

- Food bank resources
- Mexican Consulate services
- Mental health services
- Domestic violence services
- Family preparedness services
- FAITH Court Accompaniment
- Financial assistance
- Translation support for immigration petitions

Thanks to our amazing friends from the ABA's Immigration Justice Project, the Pope Francis Center has also organized three Know Your Rights presentations at the church, and we spoke with over a hundred community members.



Children coloring in the Pope Francis Center while parents are in KYR workshop in parish hall. Feb 22, 2026



ABA's Immigration Justice Project team during the KYR in the church. March 22, 2026



Volunteer training with UURISE to learn about Family Preparedness Planning. May 9, 2026

## A Glimpse into FAITH Court Accompaniment



Monday through Friday, volunteers show up to offer presence, prayer, and witness in the following locations:

- Immigration Court, Federal Building
- San Diego Field Office (ICE ERO), Federal Building
- Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) Office, Downtown
- Immigration Court, Otay Mesa Detention Center



 [olgsd.org/faith](https://olgsd.org/faith)

 [caylie@sdop.net](mailto:caylie@sdop.net)

The Pope Francis Center supports the FAITH court accompaniment program in partnership with the Diocese of San Diego & San Diego Organizing Project.

In the numbers  
677 trained volunteers | 157 clergy of all faith traditions |  
49 Catholic priests

Religious traditions represented among FAITH volunteers: Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Episcopal, Church of the Nazarene, United Church of Christ, Quaker, Unitarian Universalists, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian, Calvary Chapel, Church of God in Christ, Nondenominational Christian, Islam, Buddhism, Jewish, Self Realization Fellowship, and unaffiliated/nonreligious.

## Meet our Staff



### Brinkley Johnson

Founding Manager/Navigator

Brinkley graduated from Seattle University with a B.A. in Humanities for Teaching and a minor in Creative Writing and is currently working on her M.A. in Restorative Justice Facilitation & Leadership at University of San Diego. Brinkley has worked for immigrant solidarity organizations since 2018, starting at Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas and later supporting refugee resettlement and emergency sheltering here in San Diego. Brinkley speaks Spanish fluently and is learning Haitian Creole.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time in nature and exploring her creativity, especially through singing and dancing. Brinkley is also involved with the San Diego Catholic Workers and serves as a Young Adult Ambassador for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers. Brinkley is always so delighted to eat Mirza Ghasemi (Persian Eggplant Tomato Dip)!

Brinkley has been enjoying many aspects of her time at the Pope Francis Center. She is grateful to be part of such a dynamic and connected community and always feels welcomed. She is especially passionate about engaging in justice to work alongside the community. Brinkley finds it meaningful to be in a space where her faith and commitment to justice can come together and reinforce one another while also lending her talents to picking out the colors in the center, because creating a welcoming space sometimes starts with the perfect shade of paint.

Brinkley hopes to create an environment where dignity is restored, everyone feels welcome, and people are connected through love and hope

### Kimberly Morales

Co-Navigator

Kimberly, who joined the team at Pope Francis Center on March 9th, earned her B.A. in Spanish, Education, and Child Development from San Diego State University before going on to complete an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from Grand Canyon University. Her gentle spirit and orientation towards serving people holistically have brought a warmth and rapport to this ministry that is so helpful as we accompany people who are experiencing a wide range of emotions, stressors, and needs.

Kimberly has been an active parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe for most of her life. In addition to her work at the Pope Francis Center, Kimberly co-leads the "Cubrenos con tu Manto" ministry, also known as ICE Watch. In her rare free time, Kimberly enjoys dancing cumbia and visiting coffee shops.

What Kimberly has most enjoyed at the Pope Francis Center is the opportunity to meet amazing community activists and organizers, as it gives her hope that there is still good out there. She also cherishes the opportunity to witness and accompany our community members as they share their stories -- she takes the time to listen deeply to each person who comes to or calls the Pope Francis Center to ensure they feel heard. Kim's hope for the future of the PFC is that it continues to grow in service of the community and in a special way for the young people who have been affected by immigration enforcement.

"I don't want people to feel suppressed or that they need to go into hiding. This community is so vibrant and I don't want that to go away."



## Meet our Partners

In addition to our full-time staff, we also have arranged for onsite office hours with the American Bar Association Immigration Justice Project to offer high-quality legal consultations, orientations, and pro-se services.



**Karla Rodriguez**  
DOJ Full Accredited Rep

"Not only am I a proud daughter of immigrants, but I also have professional experience working with the immigrant community for the last fourteen years showing my commitment and genuine love in serving this population that is forced to navigate a complex legal system."



**Nancy Cuevas**  
Senior Paralegal

"Growing up in Mexico and coming from an immigrant family played a fundamental role in shaping my commitment to helping families like my own. I began working in the immigration field in 2014 while I was a student at UC Berkeley. Over the past twelve years, this work has been both meaningful and fulfilling, and I look forward to continuing to serve and support vulnerable communities through my role at the Pope Francis Center."



**Crystal Felix**  
Director, Immigration Justice Project San Diego

"I am a Managing Attorney at the ABA Immigration Justice Project where I have worked for 8 years. As a Latina removal defense attorney from National City and a parishioner of St. Jude Shrine, I am committed to social justice. My work is grounded in faith and service to the Our Lady of Guadalupe community and beyond, advocating for individuals and families with compassion and respect."

## What's on the Horizon?

Wednesday, May 13th - Seasons of Hope Catholic grief support sessions, led by the parish's Mental Health Ministry, begin

Friday, May 22nd - Nuestras Calles: Bearing Witness to Detentions; the first of a series of vigils to bear witness to the ongoing ICE detentions of our community members and the resulting family separations. All are welcome to pray, lament, and witness as a community! Meet at the corner of Julian Ave. and Cesar Chavez Pkwy. at 7:30pm.

- Spiritual & mental health support groups for adults, young adults, and youth
- In-house family emergency safety planning
- Finishing up construction in our therapeutic room, kitchen, and new ADA accessible first floor entrance!

## Support our Mission

You can donate to the Pope Francis Center online by scanning the QR code. If you are mailing a check, please pay to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, 1770 Kearney Ave, San Diego, 92113.

