January 2023

Greetings from the Franciscan Network for Migrants,

I am writing to you to request your support for the Franciscan Network's **Welcome Campaign** for migrant people. In early November, a group of twenty franciscans including priests, brothers, sisters, and lay people visited the border of El Paso and Juarez and attended the annual border mass on the Rio Grande River. In addition, we had three full days of meetings with organizations who work with migrants on both sides of the border. Attending were seven OFMs, two OFM Conventuals, an OFM Capuchin, two franciscan sisters, five secular franciscans, 2 lay franciscan missioners, and several lay people.

One of the speakers was Ruben Garcia, the executive director of Annunciation House, who has been working on the border for more than 40 years. Because of the capacity challenges faced by these smaller cities on the border, Ruben challenged us to identify and mobilize parishes, university, community groups and organizations in the US interior to agree to accept and support at least one busload of approximately 55 asylum seekers.

If your church or organization would agree to receive a busload from El Paso, Texas, Annunciation House will provide organize and finance the bus to transport the group. Most of the people coming would only need hospitality for a few days until they can make contact with their family or friends. The challenge would be for the minority of people who have no one to help them. They would need to receive extra help, perhaps more long-term help, to get settled to await their asylum hearings. Please note that all of the people arriving would have been cleared for a stay in the US.

We have seen this done before and we know that when a church decides to accept a busload, miracles happen. Attached please find our fact sheet with tips and guidance. For more details, you can contact Lori Winther, Franciscan Network for Migrants US Coordinator, at usa@redfranciscana.org.

Sincerely,

Lori Winther
National Coordinator
Franciscan Network for Migrants