

# ‡ ST. JOHN OF GOD SANCTUARY COMMUNITY ‡

## History

In 1985 the members of the St. John of God community embarked on an eight-month course of prayer and discernment regarding the plight of the Central American refugees coming to the Bay Area. Members studied Archbishop John R. Quinn's 1983 Pastoral Letter on Central America, participated in house meetings in which refugees shared their stories, and informed themselves about moral and legal issues regarding political asylum. In January 1986, over 90% of the parishioners voted in favor of Sanctuary. Since Palm Sunday 1986, our community has reaffirmed the covenant, which articulates the vision of faith taught by our brothers and sisters of El Salvador and Guatemala.

*Christ's call is to reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. In response to this call, the members of the St. John of God Community enter into this covenant to provide sanctuary -- support, protection, and advocacy -- to Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees who request haven out of well-founded fear of persecution and possibly death if they are returned to their homeland. We do this out of concern for the welfare of these refugees, regardless of their official immigration status. . .*

*St. John of God Covenant of Public Sanctuary, Palm Sunday, 1986*

As in the early years, Sanctuary work focuses on immigrant advocacy and emergency aid to immigrants in San Francisco and the Bay Area and support of development projects in El Salvador.

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## ☀ Report on Projects ☀

Guided by the Spirit, we have continued the Sanctuary commitment to solidarity through:

**Direct Support:** In the past year funds were given to the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) and Dolores Street Community Services for legal and social services for local immigrants. Both of these nonprofits have taken leadership in mobilizing our city's response to the needs of recently arrived undocumented children. Funds were also contributed to "Playing for Peace," a project in the very poor, rural community of Las Delicias located near San Salvador. A Maryknoll Lay Missioner leads this community-wide initiative to provide safe places for kids to play and keep them out of gangs.

**Development:** Funds were given to anti-gang efforts at Santa Rosa of Lima Church in San Salvador. The funds enable parish teens to continue their high school education in a collaborative project with the Ministry of Education. The teens study in a supportive environment that is safe from gang-related threats and intimidation. Funds given to Voices on the Border allowed youth from rural El Salvador to participate in a delegation to the capital, San Salvador, to meet with government officials and community activists and express issues of concern both for themselves and their larger communities.

**Protection and Human Rights Advocacy:** The Sanctuary Committee organized a Lenten "Soup & Scripture" evening focused on the leadership of local youth in the movement for immigrant rights; their efforts are part of the San Francisco Organizing Project. On Holy Thursday SJOG members participated in an interfaith service, "Washing the Feet of Immigrants." Sanctuary Committee members are part of a citywide interfaith coalition supporting immigrant rights locally and nationally. Funds were given to the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights to sustain this advocacy work.

## ☀ Please Support SJOG Sanctuary Work in 2014-2015 ☀

**Please make checks payable to St. John of God (in memo line put "C.A.R. Fund")**

Sanctuary Committee Members – Dagbevi Akpawu, Theresa Cameranesi, Rich Lang, Judy Liteky, Sherri Maurin, Roberta and Jim McLaughlin, Adrienne and Shaolin Plasse, Mark Reedy, Tessa Rouverol Callejo, Linda Vossler Swan.

*We invite community members to join us. Email Adrienne at [aplasseadrienne@gmail.com](mailto:aplasseadrienne@gmail.com).*