

Bridges

July 24, 2026



Visit to Madonna Manor



Residents of Madonna Manor enjoying treats.

On July 8, there was a small gathering at Madonna Manor. Four RJM residents from Marillac Residence in Wellesley Hills, MA headed south and two residents from St. Timothy's in Warwick, RI, headed north. Our visit with Sister Michelle Authier and Sister Alice Cote was a fun-friendly one where we renewed old memories, caught up on the present moment and enjoyed delicious ice cream and special cookies provided by our St. Tim's Community and our Marillac Community.

From left to right are: Sr. Diane Dube, Kathleen Daniello, Sr. Michelle Authier, Sr. Fatima Viramontes, Sr. Shirley Leveille, Sr. Alice Cote, Sr. Dina Garcia, Sr. Janet Stolba, and Sr. Vivian Patenaude's - the photographer. It was perfect weather to travel and a perfect atmosphere inside. It was so good to be together!

Border Ministry



(The names and certain details in this story have been changed to protect the privacy of those involved) For a few months, I have been visiting migrants who have been deprived of their freedom in a detention center. In my ministry, I have met migrants who have lived many years in the United States, good, hard-working people who paid their taxes, contributed to the well-being of this nation, had children and spouses born in this country, and who found themselves suddenly detained and in the process of deportation. During those encounters, it has been my privilege to meet them, to listen to their stories, to witness their deep faith, their resilience, and their courage.

At those visits, I learned that migrants who have been subjects of unlawful detention can file a Habeas Corpus petition before a Federal Court. Habeas Corpus is a legal procedure to protect people from arbitrary detention when imprisoned without legal justification. By these means, many migrants have been able to challenge their unlawful detention, and judges at Federal Courts have ordered their release from detention centers.

When migrants are released from Otay-Mesa Detention Center, they are transported by a van to the last station of the trolley, on the American side of the border with Mexico. Volunteers who come to the station to offer support position themselves at different corners in the area, so that people who are released are not missed. Generally, the migrants are freed between 8:30 pm and 10:30 pm, but there have been occasions in the past when they have been left stranded at 1:00 am in the area, an area that, we know, it is not safe.

Sometimes the migrants who are released have family in San Diego who can receive them and support them when they leave the prison. Other times, they do not know anyone locally, they do not have any money, and they feel vulnerable and scared in a place that is unknown to them. Because of their unlawful detention, they have lost their housing, their belongings, and any stability they had before the arrest. Any assistance that we can provide to help them is very appreciated by our brothers and sisters in need. A couple of weeks ago, I had the opportunity to accompany some migrants when they were released from detention. On that occasion, a group of seven people was brought to the trolley station at 9 pm. Thankfully, four of them were picked up by family members and friends. The other three did not have any connections in the area.

I met Lucia, a woman from Venezuela who did not know anyone in San Diego. She had been arrested in another state and transferred to Otay Mesa Detention Center, far from her husband, who, unfortunately, was also detained. After being released from imprisonment that lasted more than seven months, she was thrilled about being free again. She was also fearful about not knowing what to do since she did not have any money or a safe place to stay that night. After the volunteers and I expressed our willingness to help, she relaxed. Lucia was so thankful and joyful. She hugged me and wanted to introduce me to her family when she communicated with her loved ones in Venezuela via video call. They were so happy and expressed relief and deep gratitude for the help that was being provided. She was also fearful about not knowing what to do since she did not have any money or a safe place to stay that night. After the volunteers and I expressed our willingness to help, she relaxed. Lucia was so thankful and joyful. She hugged me and wanted to introduce me to her family when she communicated with her loved ones in Venezuela via video call. They were so happy and expressed relief and deep gratitude for the help that was being provided. The RJM's, using funds from donations, calmed the anxiety of Lucia and her family by providing a safe place for her to spend the night, finding a room for her in a hotel. The next day, with the help and generosity of other volunteers, she traveled by airplane to the state where she used to live before the arrest.

I also had the joy to welcome into freedom Pedro, from Honduras, a person whom I had previously visited at the detention center. He was elated, experiencing relief after a year and six months of isolation and what he described as poor conditions, bad food, precarious medical care, and poor treatment. He had dreamed of this day for so long, and he was so grateful and surprised to see me at the station waiting for him. He wanted me to meet his son virtually to celebrate with them his freedom. Pedro was also in a vulnerable position. With no family or friends in the area, he did not have a safe place to stay. He lacked resources to travel across the United States, where he had been instructed to go to comply with directives from immigration authorities. Another migrant, who did not know Pedro but who had also been detained in the past, offered him a temporary place to stay, while volunteers explored ways to help him travel to his destination. For many months, we have been bombarded by new immigration policies that have blocked access to the help that our vulnerable brothers and sisters need at this time, including the right that they have to due process. These have been experienced as lost battles that have caused deep pain and distress to our brothers and sisters who are migrants and all who have witnessed the path of dehumanization, violence, denigration, and injustice that has affected so many good, caring, working people and their families. In the midst of that, it was a breath of fresh air to receive our friends out of detention and to celebrate with them and their families these small but very important victories in their lives. Victories in which the signs of God have been so tangible: love, faith, goodness, solidarity, kindness, communion, joy, and new life! Thank you, loving God!

Sandra Salazar, RJM

Updates from Bethany

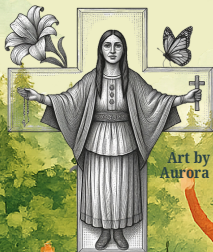
CONVERSATIONS AT BETHANY

READING THE

BOOK OF NATURE An invitation to learn and join in the act of rewilding.



Join us for an action-oriented webinar exploring climate resilience and biodiversity as two sides of the same coin.



Art by Karla Aurora Kozach.



AUGUST 19
4:00 PM EST

WEBINAR

REGISTER HERE:
[HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/JOIN/REGISTER/0HK6VSFY5Z5C7FYMBGM4Q](https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/0HK6VSFY5Z5C7FYMBGM4Q)



Saint Kateri
Conservation Center



Bethany Center
Hudson Valley

Seeing and smelling the smoke all throughout the skies today makes me grateful for the beauty of Bethany's woods and anguished for the world's forests. May our shared prayers and ministry protect these sacred habitations. And I hope all of you are safe and healthy wherever you are.

At Bethany, we continue to lift up the courage and faith of Saint Kateri as we anticipate our next webinar. I'm so pleased to share that we will be collaborating with the Saint Kateri Conservation Center to present "Reading the Book of Nature: An Invitation to Learn and Join in the Act of Rewilding." The work of the Saint Kateri Center is a gift to ecologists and the faithful all across our country. You may enjoy learning more [here!](#)

Attached is a flyer for the webinar, which will be on Wednesday, August 19th at 4 p.m. Eastern. I hope to see you all for the conversation there!

Peace,

Erin

Visit to St. Tim's

On July 8, I visited Sisters Diane, Doris, Janet, and Alice at St. Tim's. I wish the visit could've been a little longer because it was so exciting to hear many wonderful ideas that each sister shared about Bethany, and I also wanted to learn more about each sister's mission! So I think another visit and a stop for some Rhode Island clam chowder is in order. Thank you for your welcome!

Peace,

Erin



On left Srs. Doris Bissonnette,
Diane Dube with Erin.



Srs. Janet Stolba and Alice
Ouimette with Erin.

Please Pray For...



Image Courtesy of MaggieMae Dethlefsen

- Continued prayers for a friend of Mary Ann (Augello) Berdoe, Dr. Dee Tomeo, who is suffering from paralysis after back surgery.
- Edward Stolba, brother of Sr. Janet Stolba, who requests prayers
- Michele Higgins, the sister of Sr. Pat Dillon
- Prayers are requested for Brenda Mejia, a member of the family originally from Guatemala, whom RJM in the DC/Maryland area have befriended and worked with. Brenda has been diagnosed with thyroid cancer. She recently gave birth to her 4th child, a healthy baby boy who is now 3 months old.
- She had surgery on 7/23
- Please continue to pray for Colleen Pusateri, who, after waiting years for a kidney transplant, successfully received a pig's kidney—only the second successful one in the world so far. Colleen is the daughter of Lorrie Kenney, niece of Sr Eugenia Castanguay
- Please pray for St. Jill Weber, RSM, who has previously done work in Haiti, has had an unexpected medical emergency, and is in critical condition.

Praised forever be Jesus and Mary