

Edition 1

CSUEB Catholic Club



Campus ministry student leaders and alumni experienced a week-long immersion trip to the Arizona-Mexico border, a first ever for the Catholic Club. For Anahi Mejia, Rosario Esparza, Irene Casanova (students), Stephanie (Luna) Luna, and Aurora Ramos (alumni), the trip was a new way of experiencing their parents' home country. The immersion allowed us to witness hope, love and compassion amongst the migrant crisis at the U.S.- Mexico border.

Immediately after arriving in Arizona the group attended a vigil for migrants who died attempting to cross the border. Each participant went down the line reading out the names on the crosses. Some read, "Desconocido/a" or "Unknown," for those whose identities were unknown at the time their bodies were found. About 300 hundred names were read that evening.

The campus ministry group worked alongside local organizations, volunteers, and religious leaders, such as, Los Samaritans and Casa Alitas. Los Samaritans host an annual "Flood the Desert" in the Tucson Deserts. The student leaders had the opportunity to drive through the desert leaving gallons of water on an active migrant trail. We found black water jugs throughout the trail that symbolize migrants attempting to cross the border from Mexico.

We had the opportunity to sit in a court hearing for migrants who were caught throughout the journey. The court hearing we attended is known as, "Operation Streamline." It is an inhumane system to prosecute migrants who have illegally entered the country. Between six to eight individuals line up in front of a judge and take about 90 seconds each to charge the individual. We sat silently as each group came in and out of the courtroom. The room felt heavy with feelings of anger, hurt, and sadness. Tears came down on the women's faces as each migrant pleaded guilty for attempting to cross to freedom.

The group then went through the border into Agua Prieta, Mexico. We spent the morning learning about the demographics of migrants and reasons for their journeys at the Centro de Asistencia a los Migrantes en Exodo. Natural disasters, government corruption, cartels, financial strains, and other reasons cause migrants to leave their homes.

We spent each night together in prayer and reflection. Amongst the exhaustion, anger, and sadness, we kept the migrants who died in our thoughts and in our hearts. We remembered the love that God has for us, and the hope we encountered through each organization and each person we interacted with. Why should we care? Why should people try to step into the shoes of strangers? Our faith teaches us to love our neighbor, to care for God's creation, to see the face of Jesus in everyone.

Each participant of the immersion will write a reflection about their experience at the Arizona-Mexico border, so stay tuned. Please keep the campus ministry leaders in your prayers as they continue to process the immersion, and also the migrants who are on their journeys as you read this, and the migrants who have died on the way. And for all those who are searching for their safe havens.

Love and peace,

CSUEB Catholic Club