

30th Anniversary Celebration of Our Congregational Justice Ministry

Immigration Stories

(From the opening prayer service/ritual)

Story 1 (Eileen Marnien SSJ)

I came from Honduras eight years ago. My husband worked as a landscaper to provide for my family. He is a good man, a good husband and good father. He worked very hard to take care of our family. We have four children. My husband always said....one day we will become citizens of this good country. We work hard to be good Americans. Two years ago the police came to my house. They were ICE police. They had warrants for other people – people who did not live in my house. When they could not find the right men they asked my husband and two oldest sons (ages 21 and 23) to see their papers. My husband explained that he did not have documents, that my sons did not have documents. The police arrested them.... For three days I did not know where they had taken my husband and my boys. I was worried and scared. Finally, I found out that my husband and sons were in prison in York, PA. I did not know where York, PA was. I learned that it was very far from Philadelphia. Friends helped me to find a lawyer. The lawyer tried to help us but in the end my husband and one son were deported. My other son is still in York Prison. Please pray for my boys.

Story 2 (Kay Coll SSJ)

We came from Indonesia. We left Indonesia because there is much violence against Christians there. We were always afraid. My husband and I saved money for years to help us to bring our family to the United States. We know that the US is a place where all people are free to live their faith. It was a long and hard journey here. We stayed with family in South Philadelphia until we could rent a house. Now we are free to go to church. Life is very difficult in the US. We try to work but it is difficult to find jobs. We, Indonesian people take vans to jobs....some jobs we work on farms...other jobs we work to build houses...other jobs we clean. Some days only men can take the vans, other days women can take the vans, too. We travel for more than one hour....sometimes two hours to go to job. Four months ago, our friends were traveling in a work van when the police stopped the van and asked the people in the van for their documents. When the people say that they did not have papers the police took them away. They never came home that night. No one could find them. Their families were frightened. All the Indonesian people tried to find them. Then we went to church to ask for help. The priest and sister worked hard to find them. It took them two days to find our friends. They told us that our friends were taken to prison in York, PA. They are still there. We think that they will be sent back to Indonesia. We, safe Indonesian people, are trying to take care of the families of the people in York prison. The Church has helped us to get a lawyer to help our friends. Every day we live in fear.