

STRANDED

A Prayer Resource on Migrant Protection Protocols



Maria's Story

"I don't want to face again everything I already faced," says a Honduran asylum seeker named Maria. Fleeing gang threats in Honduras, she and her two children endured a harrowing kidnapping, violence, extortion, and a treacherous river crossing just to reach the US. Immediately after climbing out of the Rio Grande and onto US soil, she and her children were arrested by Border Patrol. In detention, they were told that "there is no refuge for them in US" and that "the laws have changed."

Maria and her children were sent back to northern Mexico to await their court hearing and were then bused 1,200 miles south to Tapachula, where they encountered the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Rather than face another dangerous journey north for a court hearing, Maria forfeited her claim to asylum. Maria and her children are stranded in Mexico—unable to reach the US and terrified to return to Honduras.

Let us pray for families like Maria's

*God of new life,
As your people seek refuge
in a time of uncertainty,
When borders are closed, resettlement halted, and
services limited,
May your presence be known:
You have not abandoned them, the refugees.
When Mary wept at your tomb, you came to her.
Unrecognized at first, but you were there
With arms open to receive.
May we, the global community, imitate you,
Bringing comfort to the brokenhearted
here on earth.
When all seems lost along the journey, with the
world sealed off,
may we be there, despite the distance,
With arms open to receive.*



Jesuit Conference
Office of Justice and Ecology





What Are the Migrant Protection Protocols?

The Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as “Remain in Mexico,” force asylum seekers arriving at the US-Mexico border to wait in Mexico while their asylum claim is processed. Since it was launched in January of 2019, MPP has returned more than 64,000 people to Mexico, stranding asylum seekers in significant danger.

JRS estimates that hundreds, if not thousands, of those forced to return have been kidnapped, raped or targeted by cartels and organized crime groups.

How Does COVID-19 Impact Asylum Seekers?

Since March, the US has restricted travel and asylum at its borders to stop the spread of the virus. All migrants arriving at the border without proper documentation — including asylum seekers and unaccompanied children — are being turned back. Over 20,000 have been denied asylum protections as a result.

What's At Stake?

Sending asylum seekers back to dangerous conditions is forbidden by US and international refugee law. [A JRS report urges immediate action](#) from the US government to reverse the impacts of MPP:

- Re-instate access to asylum at US borders, putting in place measures that manage risks to public health, but that do not deny persons seeking protection.
- Allow asylum seekers to wait safely in the US during the adjudication of their asylum claim.

What Can You Do?

ADVOCATE

PRAY

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ON WORLD REFUGEE DAY**