**2025 READING LIST**

**“Borders of Hope**”, by Andrea Moreno-Diaz *[Andrea was a 2023 Encuentro participant].*

<https://www.maryknollmagazine.org/2023/12/borders-of-hope/>

<https://misionerosmaryknoll.org/2023/12/fronteras-de-esperanza/>

**“52 Days on the Road“,** Nell Salzman *[Nell was a former volunteer at Casa de Refugiado, El Paso]*

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/immigration/ct-venezuelan-migrants-texas-denver-chicago-20230806-3qc5bnexxzav5ba2mbzz42uoxm-htmlstory.html>

**“The Long, Ugly History of Barb-Wire at the US-Mexico Border”** by David Romo *[El Paso Professor & Historian]*

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/the-long-ugly-history-of-barbed-wire-at-the-us-mexico-border/ar-AA1leWxu>

**Jesuit Universities Human Action Network** **(JUHAN**) Jhttps://www.jrsusa.org/story/trip-to-the-us-mexico-border-inspires-action-on-jesuit-campuses/esuits

**Maryknoll Magazine** - https://www.maryknollmagazine.org/2024/06/partners-in-mission-return-to-the-border/



**PASTORAL LETTER** by Bishop Mark Seitz, El Paso

[Bishop Seitz's remarkable pastoral letter | National Catholic Reporter (ncronline.org)](https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/distinctly-catholic/bp-seitzs-remarkable-pastoral-letter)

Zeki Saritoprak*, Professor at* John Carroll University

[The Qur’anic Perspective on Immigrants: Prophet Muhammad’s Migration and Its Implications in Our Modern Society | The Journal of Scriptural Reasoning (virginia.edu)](https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/back-issues/vol-10-no-1-august-2011-people-and-places/the-quranic-perspective-on-immigrants/)

**109th World Day of Migrants & Refugees, Pope Francis Message** *[attached]*

**“The Wall Falls”, NY Times article November 2023** *(attached)*

**VIDEO LIST**

# YouTube: Journey through the Darien Gap: Mexican authorities overwhelmed by surge *[Al Jazeera]*

YouTube: VOX “Missing Chapters”

**Documentary Film** (25min)

**Running to Stand Still-** Study of migrants/volunteers in Ciudad Juarez / El Paso. Oct 2024

<https://www.runningtostandstillfilmseries.com/>

**BOOKS:**

David Dorado Romo – “**Borderlands and The American Mexican Story”; “Ringside Seat to a Revolution: An Underground Cultural History of El Paso and Juarez 1893-1923”**

Sarah Towle – “***Crossing The Line”***

Patricia Hills Collins ***“Social Location***”

Gloria Anzaldua  ***“La Frontera”***

Michael Omi & Howard Winant ***“Racial Formation in U.S.”***

11/14/23, 10:32 PM

**Border Wall Falls Leave Migrants With Devastating — and Costly — Injuries –**

*The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/border-wall-migrant-injuries.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/us/border-wall-migrant-injuries.html*

*Hundreds of migrants have ended up needing extensive treatment in U.S. hospitals after trying to scale barriers along the southern border. By Miriam Jordan Miriam Jordan, who covers immigration, reported this story along the border in Texas and California.*

Nov. 14, 2023 Ambulances rush them daily to hospitals in El Paso, San Diego and Tucson, Ariz., writhing in pain — bones poking out of arms and legs; skulls cracked; spines shattered. The men and women arrive on stretchers flanked by an agent in the telltale green uniform of the U.S. Border Patrol. “One look, and I know it’s another wall fall,” said Brian Elmore, an emergency medicine physician at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso. The patients are all migrants who have crashed to the ground while trying to climb over the wall that separates Mexico and the United States for long stretches of the border.

In a quest to stop unauthorized immigration, the U.S. government has in recent years extended the length and height of the fortifications, and a new stretch has been authorized by the Biden administration. But many migrants have been undaunted by the barriers, and for hundreds of them, the result has been debilitating injuries that require multiple surgeries, according to physicians working in U.S. hospitals near the border. President Donald J. Trump, who made “the wall” central to his immigration agenda, ordered construction in California of a double-layered, 30-foot-tall steel bollard barrier to replace more than 400 miles of fencing that ranged from eight feet to 17 feet in height.

Since the project was completed in 2019, the number of wall-fall patients admitted to the trauma center at U.C. San Diego Health trauma center has increased sevenfold, to 311 in 2022. This year, that number is expected to surpass 350, according to the hospital, which said the number of deaths from falls has gone from zero between 2016 and 2019 to 23 since then. A comprehensive accounting of wall-related injuries and deaths does not exist, but physicians along the border have been stepping up efforts to track and study fall-related injuries and deaths. They say that the increase in recent years is significant even given the increase in border apprehensions, and that the influx of severely injured patients is straining U.S. hospitals along the border. Caring for the patients can impose a sizable financial burden because the migrants typically lack insurance yet often require multiple complex surgeries and extended inpatient care. “The problem is getting worse and worse,” said Dr. Jay Doucet, chief of the trauma unit at U.C. San Diego Health, which is about 15 miles from the Tijuana-San Ysidro border crossing, “and the hospital system is taking a big hit.” The cost of caring for migrants at San Diego’s two trauma centers — U.C. San Diego Health and Scripps Mercy Hospital — has increased from $11 million between 2016 and 2019 to $72 million from 2020 to June 2022, the latest number available.

The current network of barriers dates to the 1990s, begun under President Bill Clinton, and every administration since has erected barriers, with President Trump making “the wall” central to his immigration agenda. President Biden, who defeated Mr. Trump in 2020, had derided Mr. Trump’s intense focus on the wall. Nevertheless, Mr. Biden recently authorized an expansion of barriers in South Texas, saying his administration could not block the use of millions of dollars appropriated by Congress in 2019 for wall construction. But Mr. Biden has also been under pressure to take a harder line on unlawful immigration, which has stretched government resources and fueled criticism of the president ahead of the 2024 election. Mr. Trump, the front-runner for the Republican presidential nomination, and aides who worked with him when he was in the White House have been mapping out a plan to revive many of his administration’s anti-immigration efforts and in some cases to take even more aggressive approaches. Agents made more than 2.4 million apprehensions in the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, a record, at a time when more people than ever around the globe were fleeing their homelands for a confluence of reasons, such as political upheaval, economic duress and extreme weather.

Asked to comment on wall falls and their effect on border hospitals, U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement: “CBP’s message for anyone who is thinking of entering the United States illegally along the Southern border is simple: Don’t do it. When migrants cross the border illegally, they put their lives in peril.” Adam Hosein, an associate professor of philosophy at Northeastern University who studies the ethics of border policy, said that migrants who had crossed deserts and jungles to flee depravation were acting under “extreme duress” by the time they reached the doorstep of the United States. “These are people willing to risk everything to get here,” said Mr. Hosein, author of a book about the ethics of migration. “The wall is having little or no effect while causing extreme harm, for which the United States bears responsibility.”

RosmarieCepeda, 40, arrived in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, in early May after a months long journey from Venezuela. She said she tried using the U.S. government’s mobile app to make an appointment to enter El Paso through an official port of entry. But demand for the slots is intense and she wasn’t able to secure one, so she decided to take her chances. “I had no choice but to climb the wall,” she said. “I have three children in Venezuela to support.” On her way down in the darkness, Ms. Cepeda plummeted to the ground, shattering her lower left leg and foot. She was taken to a hospital in El Paso and underwent multiple surgeries to realign and fix her bones. She was in a wheelchair for months.

Alexander Tenorio, a neurosurgeon at U.C. San Diego, has operated on migrants with scalp lacerations that tore through to the skull. Others suffered brain damage that permanently impaired their ability to talk, walk and care for themselves. Many needed intubation for breathing, had to undergo multiple surgeries and remained for months in the hospital. Last year, U.C. San Diego had to convert a postpartum unit into a ward for the border-wall casualties. Treating gravely injured migrants has affected care for the local population. For instance, the wait time for spinal procedures has increased to nearly two weeks from three days. “This is at our center alone, and we only see severe trauma,” said Dr. Tenorio, who testified before Congress in July and has co-authored three papers on traumatic neurological injuries associated with the raised height of the wall. “It’s an untold, heartbreaking story of unnecessary human suffering,” he said. Smugglers often affix makeshift ladders to the wall on the Mexican side, which they hold in place as migrants climb to the top. It is on the descent, clinging only to the slats on the other side, often at night, that migrants sometimes slip or let go too soon, and plunge from dangerous heights onto U.S. soil. Along the El Paso sector, a 260-mile span of the border where barriers range in height from 18 feet to 30 feet, lower-extremity fractures are the most common, and they often result in several broken bones that require more than one surgery. “In the general population you see these injuries after car or motorcycle accidents, but nothing like with the frequency you see here,” said Rajiv Rajani, chair of orthopedic surgery and rehabilitation at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso and co-author of a recent study about border falls. Because most migrants do not receive follow-up care, such as physical therapy or X-rays, which is vital to achieve full recovery, he said, the injuries are often “life altering.”

Erwin Gomez, 26, another Venezuelan migrant, crushed his left forearm when he lost his grip sliding down the wall near El Paso last spring. Border Patrol agents transported him to Texas Tech Health, where he underwent two surgeries. Plates and screws were inserted in his forearm to stabilize the bones and allow them to heal; the skin was stapled together. Five months later, from Dallas, Mr. Gomez said that he had removed the staples on his own and had not been able to get prescribed physical therapy. “I can’t work because I can’t lift anything heavy,” said Mr. Gomez, who was a sergeant in the Venezuelan army. “But without a job, I can’t afford any treatment.”

*Sheelagh McNeill contributed research. Miriam Jordan reports from the grassroots perspective on immigrants and their impact on the demographics, society and economy of the United States. Before joining The Times, she covered immigration at The Wall Street Journal and was a correspondent in Brazil, India, Hong Kong and Israel.*

***MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS  
FOR THE 109th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2023***

(24 September 2023)

***Free to choose whether to migrate or to stay***

*Dear brothers and sisters!*

The migratory flows of our times are the expression of a complex and varied phenomenon that, to be properly understood, requires a careful analysis of every aspect of its different stages, from departure to arrival, including the possibility of return. As a contribution to this effort, I have chosen to devote the Message for the 109th World Day of Migrants and Refugees to the freedom that should always mark the decision to leave one’s native land.

“Free to leave, free to stay” was the title of an initiative of solidarity promoted several years ago by the Italian Episcopal Conference as a concrete response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration movements.  From attentive listening to the Particular Churches, I have come to see that ensuring that that freedom is a widely shared pastoral concern.

“An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him” (*Mt* 2:13). The flight of the Holy Family into Egypt was not the result of a free decision, nor were many of the migrations that marked the history of the people of Israel. The decision to migrate should always be free, yet in many cases, even in our day, it is not. Conflicts, natural disasters, or more simply the impossibility of living a dignified and prosperous life in one’s native land is forcing millions of persons to leave. Already in 2003, Saint John Paul II stated that “as regards migrants and refugees, building conditions of peace means in practice being seriously committed to safeguarding first of all the right not to emigrate, that is, the right to live in peace and dignity in one's own country” ([*Message for the 90th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20031223_world-migration-day-2004.html), 3).

“They took their livestock and the goods that they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him” (*Gen*46:6). A grave famine forced Jacob and his entire family to seek refuge in Egypt, where his son Joseph ensured their survival. Persecutions, wars, atmospheric phenomena and dire poverty are among the most visible causes of forced migrations today. Migrants flee because of poverty, fear or desperation. Eliminating these causes and thus putting an end to forced migration calls for shared commitment on the part of all, in accordance with the responsibilities of each. This commitment begins with asking what we can do, but also what we need to stop doing. We need to make every effort to halt the arms race, economic colonialism, the plundering of other people’s resources and the devastation of our common home.

“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need” (*Acts*2:44-45). The ideal of the first Christian community seems so distant from today’s reality! To make migration a choice that is truly free, efforts must be made to ensure to everyone an equal share in the common good, respect for his or her fundamental rights, and access to an integral human development. Only in this way will we be able to offer to each person the possibility of a dignified and fulfilling life, whether individually or within families. Clearly, the principal responsibility falls to the countries of origin and their leaders, who are called to practice a good politics – one that is transparent, honest, farsighted and at the service of all, especially those most vulnerable. At the same time, they must be empowered to do this, without finding themselves robbed of their natural and human resources and without outside interference aimed at serving the interests of a few. Where circumstances make possible a decision either to migrate or to stay, there is a need to ensure that the decision be well informed and carefully considered, in order to avoid great numbers of men, women and children falling victim to perilous illusions or unscrupulous traffickers.

“In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property” (*Lev*25:13). For the people of Israel, the celebration of the jubilee year represented an act of collective justice: “everyone was allowed to return to their original situation, with the cancellation of all debts, restoration of the land, and an opportunity once more to enjoy the freedom proper to the members of the People of God” ([*Catechesis*](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160210_udienza-generale.html), 10 February 2016). As we approach the Holy Year of 2025, we do well to remember this aspect of the jubilee celebrations. Joint efforts are needed by individual countries and the international community to ensure that all enjoy the right not to be forced to emigrate, in other words, the chance to live in peace and with dignity in one's own country. This right has yet to be codified, but it is one of fundamental importance, and its protection must be seen as a shared responsibility on the part of all States with respect to a common good that transcends national borders. Indeed, since the world’s resources are not unlimited, the development of the economically poorer countries depends on the capacity for sharing that we can manage to generate among all countries. Until this right is guaranteed – and here we are speaking of a long process – many people will still have to emigrate in order to seek a better life.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me” (*Mt*25:35-36). These words are a constant admonition to see in the migrant not simply a brother or sister in difficulty, but Christ himself, who knocks at our door. Consequently, even as we work to ensure that in every case migration is the fruit of a free decision, we are called to show maximum respect for the dignity of each migrant; this entails accompanying and managing waves of migration as best we can, constructing bridges and not walls, expanding channels for a safe and regular migration. In whatever place we decide to build our future, in the country of our birth or elsewhere, the important thing is that there always be a community ready to welcome, protect, promote and integrate everyone, without distinctions and without excluding anyone.

The synodal path that we have undertaken as a Church leads us to see in those who are most vulnerable – among whom are many migrants and refugees – special companions on our way, to be loved and cared for as brothers and sisters. Only by walking together will we be able to go far and reach the common goal of our journey.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 11 May 2023*

FRANCIS

***PRAYER***

*God, Father Almighty,  
grant us the grace to work tirelessly  
for justice, solidarity and peace,  
so that all your children may enjoy  
the freedom to choose whether to migrate or to stay.*

*Grant us the courage to denounce  
all the horrors of our world,  
and to combat every injustice  
that mars the beauty of your children  
and the harmony of our common home.*

*Sustain us by the power of your Spirit,  
so that we can reflect your tender love  
to every migrant whom you place in our path,  
and to spread in hearts and in every situation  
the culture of encounter and of care.*

*\*\*\*\*\**