

# *Join us on the journey of the whole self - in body, mind, heart, and spirit*

REFUGE OF THE HEART, A PILOT CHAPLAINCY  
PROGRAM AT CASA REFUGIADOS IN MEXICO  
CITY, MEXICO

## Dear friends, family, and neighbors,

Refuge of the Heart is up and running! Monday through Friday, I send a new meditation or prayer to the website for Casa Refugiados so that people who visit the page can pray or meditate at their leisure. You're welcome to check it out for yourself at <http://enlacasita.mx/>. I am beginning to reach out to the community of people seeking asylum, and am already developing good relationships with the team at Casa Refugiados. Three times a week, we gather with whoever is interested or available to share a meditation together. We meet virtually, and many have already accepted my invitation for the weekly gatherings up until the end of the project! It warms my heart to see their enthusiasm and to hear that they feel like they've been longing for an opportunity to gather, to breathe, and to reflect.

The concept of these prayers and meditations is to consider the topic of migration holistically. We will contemplate movement and migration as things that affect the whole self—in body, mind, heart, spirit.

Together we will move **toward hope** despite fear.

We will move **toward peace** despite violence.

We will move **toward love** despite hate.

We will move **toward joy** despite pain.

We will move **toward wellness** despite illness or unwellness.

Like the structure of the Psalms, each week I seek to make space for lament even as we seek hope, peace, love, joy, and wellness. In the beginning of the week, I emphasize the need to name and lament the existence of fear, violence, hate, pain, and illness, and gradually throughout the week the prayers and meditations shift from lament to praise and thanksgiving.

Originally, I only included the first four themes, thinking of the weeks of Advent and how they are core concepts of many world religions. However, in the context of the pandemic, I felt called to



### MY BACKGROUND

My name is Kathryn Ophardt. I am going into my second year at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary to pursue a Master of Divinity. I graduated from Wittenberg University with a degree in Spanish and Sociology. Then, I did a year of service through the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America as a Young Adult in Global Mission, where I served with Casa Refugiados. There, I felt the call to ministry more clearly. In the future, I hope to be a pastor or chaplain for the Presbyterian Church. My passion for ministry is fueled by my background in Spanish and Sociology, through which I hope to help build the Kingdom of God in midst of our cultural contexts, not despite them.



## ACCOMPANIMENT THROUGH PRAYER:

Part of the goal of Refuge of the Heart is to bridge our communities by praying for one another. If you have any prayer requests that you would like me to lift up, please contact me and I will gladly keep you in prayer as well.

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

Please pray for all the people in movement, that they may move safely, that they may move toward hope, peace, love, joy, and wholeness.

Please pray for the team at Casa Refugiados, that they may find strength and compassion in their work, and that they may find rest and be renewed each day.

Please pray for Mexico City and all the people who live here as we move into the final days of the peak of the pandemic. Please pray for health and recovery.

Please pray for me in Refuge of the Heart, that I may have the kindness and wisdom to accompany people well.



include meditations and prayers about wellness. We are seldom entirely well or entirely ill. Instead, there is usually a tension within us between the two whether it be physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. Usually, there is some part of us that is well and some part of us that needs healing.

Today, I invite you to participate in one of the meditations that I will share through Refuge of the Heart. It is a meditation or prayer for holistic health and healing. It is an adaptation of The Examen which comes from Ignatian practice of imaginative prayer. The idea of an Examen is to pray through your day or life in such a way that it invites God to illuminate it and to accompany you as you explore it. The Ignatian Examen is meant to take 10-20 minutes, so feel free to move through the questions at your own pace, spending as much time dwelling on each one as you feel is necessary. Whether you use this guide as a meditation for self-exploration or as a prayer to invite God into your life more intimately, it is an invitation to consider in what ways you feel well and in what ways you feel unwell in body, mind, heart and spirit.

### A Prayer or Meditation for Holistic Health:

- ❖ Find a comfortable position in a calm place where you can be and breathe calmly. Take slow, deep breaths until you feel calm within and around you.
- ❖ Take a moment to give thanks for the good things in your life today—whether it be big or as simple as having air to fill your lungs.
- ❖ Quiet your mind and thoughts so that you can listen to the other parts of yourself—your emotions, your body, your spirit.
- ❖ In your mind, go over what happened during the day, hour by hour. Identify the moments that seem the most significant.
- ❖ Consider the most difficult moments of the day. When did you feel unwell? Did you feel unwell in body? In mind? In heart? In spirit?
  - Where did this feeling come from?
  - How could this feeling be treated?
  - What kind of healing do you seek?
- ❖ When you are ready to move on, consider the best moments of the day, the moments of peace, of joy, of love, and of hope.
  - When did you feel well? Did you feel well in body? In mind? In heart? In spirit?
  - How could you fill your life with more moments like this?
  - Imagine how it would feel to be well as a whole person in body, mind, heart, and spirit? If you feel led, say a prayer for this kind of wellness and wholeness.
- ❖ Take a moment in silence, listening if there is anything else that emerges from the meditation.
- ❖ When you are ready, conclude this time as you feel led (maybe with the Lord's prayer, the sign of the cross, or by saying Amen). May you go in peace.

I cherish your accompaniment on this journey with Refuge of the Heart.

Peace be with you,  
Kathryn Ophardt