

May 2016



Dear Friends,

Just a few weeks ago, more than 500 refugees from Africa and the Middle East died when their boat sank in the Mediterranean. In 2015, more than 800 drowned off the shore of Libya in their desperate attempt to reach Italy.

I think it's time for us to clear our heads of campaign rhetoric and turn instead for direction to our rich faith tradition—our Jewish and Christian Scriptures and our Catholic Social Teaching—so that we can respond humanely to this global tragedy of mass human suffering.

While visiting Mexico in February, Pope Francis reminded us that “the human tragedy that *forced migration* represents is a global phenomenon today. This crisis, which can be measured in numbers and statistics, we want instead to measure with *names, stories and families.*”

Thus, in early June, St. John Chrysostom Church will sponsor a mother and daughter, Lena and Nami, as they begin a new life in the USA. Our commitment is compelled by the words of the Jewish prophets, the Gospel message of Jesus to stand with the most vulnerable, and the personal example set by our Holy Father.

Several parishioners and I have been working to develop concrete steps to assist this family. When we recently met Lena, the first thing she did was to offer us a cup of tea. Nami, who will soon graduate from kindergarten, was eager to show us her jump-roping skills. What a tender moment of human encounter. Such simple gestures remind us of our common humanity and the kinship of all God's children.

Our initial goals in assisting Lena and Nami are simple: First and foremost, to provide an embrace of love and welcome. Second, to help identify and subsidize their housing and other daily needs. Finally, we will help them address those challenges so familiar to our own ancestors: learning English, finding employment and schooling.

All along this path, we want to instill in them the independence and self-direction of our country's citizens.

Our parish website will soon publicize a list of furnishings and other needs for Lena and Nami. Monetary donations will also be needed for food, rent and other essentials. Checks may be made payable to *St. John Chrysostom*, noting “*Lena and Nami*” in the memo field. Cash donations should be placed in an envelope with this notation. Donations may be placed in the Sunday collection or mailed or dropped off to the Parish House.

On his visit to the United States in 1987, St. John Paul II said, “The ultimate test of your

greatness is the way you treat every human being, but especially the weakest and most defenseless ones.”

Let us pray for Lena, Nami and all persons willing to risk everything to flee repression, poverty and war.

In the peace of Christ,

*Fr. Ed Hallinan*