

## Travels of a Pilgrim seeking Justice

by Sister Myra Remily



My pilgrimage began Wednesday afternoon to meet up with Sr. JoAnn. I stayed the night and the next morning we set out for Minneapolis, where we stayed with some friends, Greg and Rita Corcoran. They are a couple who give their part in the SOA pilgrimage by giving us housing.

The next morning we boarded the bus to head for Fort Benning, Georgia to demonstrate against this military base that trains men (maybe women) military tactics that eventually are used against their own people in Latin America. Thousands have been massacred being aided by this base.

It took us 24 hours on the bus. Sr. JoAnn shared that part of our pilgrimage. As she also expressed that is to be our last trip to Georgia as the SOA is moving to the southern border.

I would like to share a bit more of the detention center we protested outside a town called Lumpkin. The center is located 1.7 miles from the center of Lumpkin. There was a short program in town sharing some of the atrocities that take place in these detention centers that are scattered around the states, this particular one (Stewart detention center) is the largest. Georgia has two more and one other one to be built. After the short program 1400 of us marched up the hill to the detention center singing and chanting justice phrases as we went along. We all crowded as close to the gate as we could and clapped and hollered as loud as we were able to let the detainees know we were there to give them support and courage.

These detention center conditions are extremely abusive. The food is worming and they get very little, Very poor health aid if any, a phone card costs double or triple of what we would pay. So to contact love ones are almost impossible if they can't buy a phone card. These people suffer from having their dignity taken away and to keep having hope is a suffering that is deep into the soul. How anyone can live with themselves when they treat humanity like this.

To make matters more insulting is that these detention centers are a for private profit companies. They are paid for by our tax dollars. The more detainees the more money these corporations make.

My very soul weeps for these people who are suffering simply because they want a better life for themselves and for their children. Are we so cruel that we deprive these hard working people a life that our own very ancestors came for the same reason? I find this very shameful and extremely sad that we treat human beings in this manner.

Let us do what we can to alleviate this kind of activity in our country that is supposed to be noted for taking in the stranger. I too am very grateful for my community for allowing me to participate in this pilgrimage along with Sr. Jo Ann and the bus being provided by Veterans for Peace organization of Minneapolis. We all must work for justice and equality for all not just for a few.