



FAMILIES BELONG TOGETHER

It's a new year, and a new administration in the United States. President Biden has pledged to “restore sensible enforcement priorities” in immigration, and he has said targeting those who have lived and worked in the U.S. for decades is counterproductive. And although Jaime Rubio waits to find out exactly how change will be implemented and what that could mean for his case, this is bright hope. Jaime has been in Sanctuary at Saint Mark's for nearly two years—a stretch of time beyond his wildest imagination when he first came to the cathedral in order to keep his family together, in March of 2019. Jaime and his wife and son have had to dig in and hold on as the pandemic made already slow legal channels grind down completely. It's a long time to be waiting with an uncertain future. But Jaime and his family are committed—and listening with eager hearts for news.

Jaime has said that many of his friends and the people that he talks with ask him—now that everyone has been dealing with a kind of being-stuck-in-place during the pandemic—how he has managed to stay inside at the

cathedral for this long without going crazy, and his answer is always the same: “For me, it's not an option. When I decide to get in Sanctuary, I commit that I will stay until I find a legal remedy for my situation.” There is renewed hope that the legal remedy could be coming soon, although in the convoluted world of one's life being at the mercy of immigration and deportation policy, much has to be made certain before the word “safe” can be breathed. And so Jaime and his family wait.

Jaime said, “Sometimes it feels like my entire life is on pause. I see the same walls every day. The only thing that is changed is the season. I see the trees growing new leaves in spring, I see the same trees sprout and get all green in summer, and I see the same trees change colors from green to yellow, red, and brown in fall, and I see the same trees getting smaller with no leaves in winter. I think that is something that really put my time in perspective. And I am not the only one pausing. It is my family, the community, my friends waiting with me, too, and I just cannot wait for the date that I'll be able to go outside the church

with my son and my wife without the fear I will be separated.”



For Jaime, this struggle is bigger than himself and even his family:

“We are fighting for justice, to get a new immigration reform more humane, and for the thousands of people that their only mistake was to try to find a better future, and for the people that may come after me. I believe we all share the feeling of hope, hope to have a positive change in this new administration, not only for immigration, but new laws to protect the more vulnerable people in the society. Because everyone, no matter how big or how small the job is, we are all equally important and essential in the country. It's more important be able to work together no matter the color of your skin, ethnicity or beliefs, because that is the only way we can move forward to make things better for everyone.”

And because families belong together. May it finally be so! ♦

Above: Photo by Joe Mabel via Wikimedia Commons, CC by SA 4.0.