



# Children of the Immaculate Heart

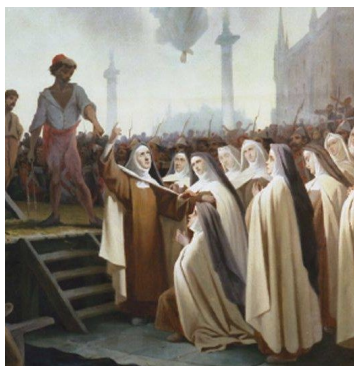


## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

AUGUST 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

*Praised be Jesus Christ!* As I write this, it is exactly one year ago that we had a meeting at the County with the licensing department that oversees The Refuge as a licensed Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children. It was a routine meeting that takes place during the licensing process, but it ended up being anything but routine! Just a few days before, on June 12, we had received a set of revisions to our Program Statement from the State which we believed, if we had followed them, would have compromised our conscience as a Catholic agency.



*Holy Martyrs of Compiègne, Pray for us!*

It was on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019, that it became evident to us that legal action was required, and with representation from the Freedom of Conscience Defense Fund ([fcdfllegal.org](http://fcdfllegal.org)), we filed a lawsuit against the California Department of Social Services for allegedly violating our constitutional rights of religious liberty and freedom of speech, and we requested fair and equal treatment in the licensing process so that we could open The Refuge—a home for trafficked minor girls ages 12 to 17 with residential, educational, and therapeutic services in a home-like setting.

Many of you have followed our story over the past year. I personally am eternally grateful to so many of you who have continued to support us throughout this process and who have believed in this project since it was an idea planted in our minds by God way back in 2012. I am very excited and grateful, not to mention relieved, to inform you that we settled the lawsuit out of court and filed the settlement paperwork at the *Superior Court of California* on July 13, 2020, one year

and a day after it all began! Today's liturgy, July 17, celebrates the feast of the Carmelite martyrs of Compiègne who shed their blood during the French Revolution rather than deny their faith, and I consider it an honor to have their feast be the bookends to our lawsuit. I am very happy that on their feast I can give praise and thanks to God with all of you for bringing this to a happy conclusion just a year after that meeting at the County when the tide turned...

Staff training will begin August 3<sup>rd</sup> and shortly thereafter we will be receiving placements from Child Welfare Services and Probation to The Refuge. We appreciate your prayers and financial support as we move forward in this endeavor that reminds me of the words of Mother Teresa of Calcutta – “Do something beautiful for God.”

We have a final request—the owner of The Refuge wants to sell the property. We are looking for a benefactor to purchase the home who we can continue to lease the property from or for a benefactor(s) to help us purchase the property. If you are interested in supporting our work in this way, please email me at [grace.williams@ciheart.org](mailto:grace.williams@ciheart.org) or call our office and ask for me or Edward Kariithi, our CFO.

Yours in Christ,

Grace Williams



# REFUSING SLAVERY - ANNE'S STORY

\*Names and locations have been changed to protect the identity of the survivor\*

Anne first became a victim of human-trafficking her senior year of high school after a long-endured life of neglect and abuse. When Anne was 5, her mother's boyfriend began sexually abusing her. After repeated threats of beatings toward her mother and brothers, she decided to keep all these things to herself for 11 years. Finally, at the age of 16, she had the courage to tell her mother about everything, but instead of maternal compassion, Anne's outreach was met with obstinate denial. To this day, her mother still refuses to accept that the abuse ever happened.

At 17, after years of being rejected by her mother and still at the mercy of her abuser, Anne left home. To provide for herself, she dropped out of her senior of high school, 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. A young woman offered to take her in and live under her roof, so long as she agreed to sell herself. By this, Anne was brought into "the life" which resulted in her meeting her pimp.

Trapped with few options and no apparent way out, Anne found herself unable to attempt an escape until she found out she was pregnant with her firstborn in 2009. However blocking her from fully leaving the life was her pimp, whose violence and abuse would follow her wherever she tried to go. As is typical with the possessiveness of a trafficker, he stalked her aggressively. He

would break her car windows and slash her tires. When he found her, he would beat her, drown her, or stab her with lead. In 2013, Anne was given some respite when her now ex-trafficker was convicted of murder in 2013 and sent to jail.

Though free from her trafficker, she was only able to go back to her previous situation with her mother and one of her brothers - an environment which didn't improve upon her return. Refusing to ever be enslaved by a trafficker again, Anne chose to endure an emotionally and physically abusive home life. Draining Anne's resources, her mother forced her to pay her bills and eat what little food Anne had to provide her now 3 kids.

In 2018, Anne found *Children of the Immaculate Heart* and has held a steady job as a client-intern for almost a year! In addition to this, she also has found her own apartment, where she is able to raise her kids. She is planning to attend cosmetology school next year so she can begin her path to financial independence. After 2 years of being with CIH, Anne has decided to enter preparatory stages of RCIA with one of our priest friends, and have her kids enrolled in catechesis classes! We are happy to have known her for these multiple years, and we ask all of you for your prayers for Anne!

*Any support you can offer to our clients is much appreciated! Your gifts make our work possible to set them on a path to interior and exterior freedom.*



St. John Eudes

and Why Mary  
Loves SURVIVORS

Sometimes we are asked why we named our home The Refuge. We must admit that it was not a name of our own making. The Refuge has a long history dating back to the 1600's in France, in a city 2 hours east of Paris called Caen. During this time, St. John Eudes was a missionary priest, traveling from parish to parish throughout France with his brother priests in the *Congregation of Jesus and Mary* that he had founded some years prior. On these missions, they would preach and hear confessions for

long hours and the saint noticed a pattern: women would come to his confessional who were enslaved in prostitution and they were repentant of their sins, but without help, they were stuck in this devastating life. He realized that absolution was not the only thing they needed - they needed a place to live with other women who would care for them, love them, teach them a trade, and help them find a place in society where they could belong and succeed.



St. John Eudes found a good woman willing to take in these women, but it quickly became clear that they needed more - something with structure and women who would dedicate their lives to serving these poor souls who had no one to help them. Beginning with a few nuns from the *Visitation Order*, he helped form a religious community of women to whom the Church gave the illustrious title of the *Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of The Refuge*, whose motherhouse is in Caen. Here girls and women could go to escape “the life” and find a life of prayer, work, and recreation among a group of loving religious. The Refuge quickly spread throughout France after a long and hard road in forming it and finding approval from Rome.

St. John Eudes had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and her “Most Admirable Heart.” He composed a Mass in honor of this most loving heart, which, with the approval of the Bishop, was celebrated for the first time at The Refuge in Caen! From its liturgical inception, the heart of Mary was celebrated *for women coming out of sexual exploitation and for those serving them. Eventually the liturgical celebration of Mary’s heart was spread to the whole Church, but here at Children of the Immaculate Heart we know that it all began right at home - with the heart of the Mother for her children, the perfect image of the heart of her Son.* This connection to Children of the Immaculate Heart was only noticed *after* it was named so. Our Lady -specifically through her Immaculate Heart- seems to reach out in a particular way to those who come out of sexual exploitation.

This month we celebrate the feast of St. John Eudes on August 19th as well as the older date for the feast of the Heart of Mary - August 22nd. During this month, let us seek their intercession that our hearts would be molded after that of the Eternal Son in time: “Oh Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto Thine!”

## FINAL STEP TO OPEN THE REFUGE



STAFF TRAINING  
AUGUST 3RD - 15TH

[GOFUNDME.COM](https://GOFUNDME.COM/F/HELPTRAFFICKEDMINORS)  
[/F/HELPTRAFFICKEDMINORS](https://GOFUNDME.COM/F/HELPTRAFFICKEDMINORS)

# MEET THE REFUGE'S LEADERS !

## AMY SORENSEN —ADMINISTRATOR

Amy began working for Children of the Immaculate Heart in January of 2019. She came with a decade of experience first as a Victim Advocate in San Bernardino, and then working at the San Diego Center for Children, providing service and care for youth in need. Amy worked the last year and a half with our adult program and now, with her background in both Psychology and Childhood Education, and many years of experience, our apostolate is blessed to have Amy leading the team at The Refuge!



## TATIANA ROSENBORG — PROGRAM MANAGER & SOCIAL WORKER



Originally from Costa Rica, Tatiana found Children of the Immaculate Heart after an early retirement from Child Welfare Services of San Diego. After 20 years of working for the County, Tatiana finds that the freedom to have her Catholic faith be a part of her work at The Refuge unlike anything she's ever experienced before. Having Tatiana on board has been invaluable and we are excited to have her as The Refuge's Program Manager. She brings so much energy to the team!

## LYSS DE LA TORRE, LPCC — THERAPIST

Before Children of the Immaculate Heart's apostolic work of restoration began, Lyss and our CEO Grace Williams met during a pro-life pilgrimage back in 2012. Lyss played a big role in the founding of CIH, as she is ultimately responsible for getting Grace interested in this work! After the pilgrimage, they parted ways; Grace to start the apostolate, and Lyss to study to become a therapist and expert in trauma treatment. After 8 years of experience and education, Lyss joins the very CIH she helped inspire! Originally from Colorado, she says she feels blessed to trade weekends hiking the mountains with her pup to endless days at the beach. Children of the Immaculate Heart is happy to have Lyss work one-on-one with the future residents of The Refuge!



## CAR DONATIONS !

Please consider donating your vehicle to CIH! *Car Easy will come pick up your car, boat, or trailer whether it is running or not!* Cars can be donated from anywhere in the country. To start the process just call **855-500-7433** or type <http://careasy.org/details?4567> into your web browser. Proceeds go to support our programs!

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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