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Save Regina!

Update June 3, 2005

As those in the Milwaukee area know, Regina's situation is now urgent!

Regina phoned Sister Josephe Marie at 4:15 A.M. on Wednesday (June 1) asking her to call her lawyer because ICE (Immigration & Customs Enforcement) was taking her to their Service Staging Area in Broadview, Illinois. Regina thought it would mean an early morning court appearance for her release, but Sister began to tremble. She felt cold, her mouth suddenly dry. "I will call her right away, Regina. Do not say anything or sign anything without your lawyer."

In lieu of the missing passport, the Democratic Republic of Congo had issued a travel document for Regina.

Later that morning, with the guidance of Attorney Mary Sfasciotti, Regina signed the papers. ICE agents then told her that she is scheduled for deportation next Wednesday, June 9, and that David and the children are to bring her clothes and say their good-byes to her on Tuesday. She was then transported back to the Kenosha County Detention Center.

Attorney Sfasciotti immediately phoned the Board of Immigration Appeals, and then prepared amendments to strengthen her motion to reopen Regina's case. One is the comprehensive report of psychiatrist Dr. Val of the University of Illinois, who after 4.5 hours with Regina, concluded that she had indeed suffered rape and the trauma had deeply effected her struggle to remember details.

Congresswoman Gwen Moore's office which has dedicated all their attention to her case for many weeks, phoned their contact at the Board of Immigration Appeals. (The congresswoman had earlier sent a strong letter urging Regina's case be expedited.) They assured Moore that since Congo had now issued the travel document, Regina's case immediately became a priority. Within a day or two, three judges will study Attorney Mary Sfasciotti's motion in order to assess whether the case merits review - not to decide the case - but to see if it is strong enough to be reopened. If they decide to re-open her case, they will stay the removal, stopping Regina's deportation.

That is our strongest hope right now.

On Thursday, Sfasciotti also petitioned for an emergency hearing in federal court where she intends to contest the constitutionality of the section of the recent "Real I.D. Act," that forbids an immigrant in deportation proceedings from filing for a writ of habeas corpus - the universally recognized back-up plan for anyone being denied justice. Tacked onto the must-pass budget bill, it went into effect on April 11, the very day Sfasciotti filed for Regina's writ of habeas corpus! In other words, Congress denied Regina her right to seek justice anywhere outside of the

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immigration courts which have already failed her twice.

At Broadview, Regina was locked in a claustrophobically tiny room with a Latino detainee who spoke no English. The telephone became her lifeline. On Wednesday when Sister visited her in Kenosha, Regina said, “Whenever I began to get depressed, I called.” It worked both ways. While Sister frantically tried to reach Sfasciotti, then David, the Committee, elected officials, it was Regina’s collect calls that jolted her back into faith. Regina’s voice was firm, “Now, Sister, don’t panic. God’s not gonna let me be deported. My faith is strong.” And it still is. When she veers into panic, she remembers the times God rescued her in the past.

On Tuesday as the prison guard brought Regina back down the hallway in Kenosha, her thirty dorm mates saw her coming and stood in stunned silence, many of them with tears coming down their faces. The guard opened the door and as she walked in, they rushed to hug her. Then they put her in the center and they all gathered around to pray for her. A woman named Laetitia later assured Regina, “God says, you not gonna be deported. You gonna stay in jail for awhile longer, then you gonna go home to your family.” Their love utterly surprised Regina. Later they all gathered with her to watch her case on the evening news.

This morning she phoned, again in a trembling panic. Sister Josephe prayed with her and told her to ask Laetitia to pray again, too.

Regina needs us now more than ever.

The strongest help we can offer right now is spiritual. Remembering God’s fidelity in our own lives, we stand together as a wall of loving protection. Faith-filled prayer is what clears the spiritual atmosphere all around Regina and her family. Scripture says, “Perfect love casts out fear.” Pray that she and David abide in that Perfect Love. Pray for Mary Sfasciotti and the people making decisions about her life, that they will act with compassion, wisdom and integrity to quickly grant her full justice.

Continue shining a very brilliant light on Regina’s case. By spotlighting her case, we can make a difference in thousands of lives!

Keep checking our website, www.SaveRegina.org.

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