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Prayers for victims of poverty and U.S. border policy

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NCR Today

Father Ricardo Elford of Tucson, along with attorney Isabel Garcia, founded a weekly vigil 497 weeks ago, to pray for those who have perished crossing from Mexico into the United States. Ricardo sent me a copy of the latest vigil liturgy.

It opens thus: Remembering our sisters and brothers who have died on the border in search of work. In the year that ended September 30 (2009), bodies of at least 206 migrants were found just on the Arizona part of the border. Since October 1, two more. Since 2000, at least 1,852. Since 1994, at least 5,600 migrants have died due to government border policy--more border deaths than in all the years of the Berlin Wall. (Elford is referring to the immigration policy of sealing off areas that are easy to cross, thus forcing people to travel through lethal desert terrain.)

And the vigil liturgy ends: "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Let us all, during this holiday season, stand in solidarity with God's poor along the border.

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