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Sanctuary movement, stays of removal and deportation

by NCR Staff

Immigration and the Church

The *Arizona Daily Star* reports on one immigrant's case and refers to stays of removal and to the sanctuary movement that occurred years ago in Tucson:

The Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church came within a wisp last week of becoming Tucson's first sanctuary church in two decades

Rev. Bill Rimmel and the west Tucson church offered shelter to Alfonso Morales-Macias, a 41-year-old father of two facing deportation.

Ultimately, it doesn't appear Morales-Macias and his family will need sanctuary because Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials changed course and are now expected to approve a stay of removal for him, said his attorney, Margo Cowan. That would allow him to stay for one more year - putting him one step closer to being able to apply for legal residency when his U.S.-born daughter turns 21 in September 2013.

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Most Holy Trinity isn't offering an open door for all illegal immigrants facing deportation, but Rimmel said the church would absolutely consider sheltering others depending on the circumstances.

It remains to be seen if Most Holy Trinity's offer will spark another sanctuary movement in Tucson.

The first one ended in the early 1990s, said Rev. John Fife, a retired pastor at Southside Presbyterian Church and one of the founders of the movement.

Read the rest of the in-depth story here.

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