



Las Monarcas Project

In 2017, the Aquinas Center countered hateful rhetoric surrounding migration with our *Hallway of Hope* project, in which we invited people to send us hopeful and encouraging pictures and messages to greet the 550 people who walk through our doors each week. Many of these drawings, now framed, still adorn the walls of the center.

This year, we invite our supporters and friends to create an origami butterfly for our latest art installation. The mixed media piece will focus on Aquinas Center's value of transformation, as it applies to the self and to society as a whole.

Why Monarch Butterflies?

Every year, the monarch butterfly migrates from Mexico, across the United States, into Canada, and back to Mexico. This migration takes place over the span of several generations; no one butterfly makes the entire trip. Rather, miraculously, something in the butterflies' DNA tells them where to go. Because of the monarch's intergenerational journey, its disregard for human-made borders, and its change from caterpillar to butterfly, it has become a powerful symbol of movement and transformation, used by activists and artists advocating for justice.



Although the monarch as a symbol of migration has long been used both in the U.S. and in Latin America, it has recently become a widespread image used to advocate for immigrant rights, used in demonstrations, protests, and public artwork nationwide. Favianna Rodriguez is one artist that has worked to develop this symbol, with the slogan "Migration is Beautiful." She sees the butterfly as a way to re-envision the way we think about migration and borders:

Butterflies can cross borders, so the butterfly is the symbol to talk about the beauty of migrants as they are moving from place to place. Just like butterflies migrate in order to survive, people migrate in order to survive. It is not just about economics, it is also about people wanting to be unified with their families... These are all beautiful stories of who we are as humans, and I think that the butterfly is very symbolic of that.

Take creative action!

Show your support for people on the move.

Fold and send your butterflies to:

Aquinas Center
Las Monarcas Project
1700 Fernon Street
Philadelphia, PA 19145

