



Jorge has been separated from his three kids – 8, 11, and 16 – now for over two years. He is happy that his kids are U.S. citizens and that they are safe, but he said, “I cannot be deported because I cannot live apart from my family. They depend on me and the money I make for the family working cherries, apples, and pears. I cannot make this kind of money in Mexico.”

When I asked Jorge how things were going inside NORCOR, he said, “They took my pillow.” “They took your pillow?” “Yes,” he said. “They replaced my old mattress with a new mattress with a built-in pillow. Then they took my pillow. It is uncomfortable and I am not sleeping well.” I felt frustration rising in me at the subtle dehumanization that Jorge and other detainees face every day.

Jorge told me something very poignant today. He said that before ICE got him he had a disagreement with his oldest daughter, Laura, and he said it never has fully resolved. The disagreement has been eating at him. He thinks about it every day. Although they talk on the phone, he says, “It is hard to feel like we can completely make up unless I can see her face-to-face and I can hug her.”

He said he had a dream a couple night ago. He said, “God gave me this dream.” In the dream, he and his children were playing soccer out in their yard and he and his daughter Laura got tripped up, and both fell down. Looking at each other, they started laughing and laughing together. He said he woke up laughing with a feeling of peace. He was at peace with his daughter. He decided that day he would call her.

He called her and told her about how he was feeling— how he felt ill at ease about their argument and he told her about his dream. They cried together over the phone. And now Jorge has me tearing up with him as he tells me this beautiful story.

Jorge said if it is possible, could he have some more money for his phone account because he is running low after the long conversation he had with his daughter. Phone calls are expensive at NORCOR, 25 cents a minute, three times the amount of a phone call at Tacoma. I told him the visiting clergy are coming up with a way to pool donated money so we can put money on individual phone accounts at Norcor easily. He was very happy when I told him that people of faith from around the state were interested in supporting him and his family.

This story is one in a series of stories from immigrants who have been detained at NORCOR, a four-county public jail in The Dalles, OR. NORCOR has a contract to rent out beds to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) - in violation of Oregon's 30-year-old sanctuary law. The stories in this series have been written by either clergy or attorneys - the only people who are currently allowed to visit immigrants detained at NORCOR. Jorge's story is a composite of multiple stories that shares the truth of the experiences of those detained and protects their identities.