



Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Hermanas de la Misericordia de las Americas

Institute Office

August 10, 2006

STATEMENT: Sisters of Mercy Advocate for Compassionate U.S. Immigration Policy

(Silver Spring, MD) – The Sisters of Mercy are moved by the Gospel and by our heritage to stand with and assist those who are forced to move from their homelands and seek economic and physical survival elsewhere. In our spirit of welcome and hospitality, we have always ministered to immigrant persons and to those most vulnerable.

We – 4,515 Catholic sisters and more than 2,800 associates, several Companions in Mercy, over 900 Mercy Volunteer Corps alumni and hundreds of co-workers in Mercy-sponsored programs and institutions – now call on the government of the United States to pass compassionate U.S. immigration policy which includes a pathway to lawful permanent residence and citizenship, meets immigrants' basic needs, and encourages family unity/reunification.

The Sisters of Mercy recognize that no immigration legislation will be complete without addressing the root causes of migration. Our sisters in other countries describe the necessary migration of people due to poverty, war and violence, and environmental destruction. Many U.S. policies widen the gap between our world's richest and poorest peoples and continue the proliferation of weapons, of violence and of war. We call on our lawmakers to change these policies as part of immigration reform.

We believe that every person has the right to safe and decent living and working conditions, education and healthcare. We believe immigrants should have the opportunity to work toward citizenship, and secure the unity of their families. This will strengthen American communities, and continue our heritage as a welcoming nation, a nation built by immigrants. Who among us would not take whatever measures we could to protect and feed our families, and provide them with a better life than is now available to them?

Our commitment to a merciful way of life demands that we meet, by direct service and systemic change, the needs of those who suffer. For that reason, we are working with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops and others for a comprehensive overhaul that creates a humane immigration system. We will continue to welcome and assist those who seek hope, home and labor in this country.

Like many Americans, the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas came to this country as immigrant women. Since 1843 we have ministered to the needs of immigrant persons as part of our commitment to serve the most vulnerable and in response to the Gospel's call to welcome the stranger and to live in communion with others. Today we can do no less. The Gospel and the directives of our religious congregation call us to act and speak on behalf of our sisters and brothers who have been silenced. We welcome the invitation to be true to the call.

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The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas are an international community of women religious vowed to serve people who suffer from poverty, sickness and lack of education, with a special concern for women and children. In innovative and traditional ways, Sisters of Mercy address human needs through collaborative efforts in education, health care, housing, and pastoral and social services. The Institute includes 4,515 sisters who serve in North, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Guam and the Philippines. More than 2,800 associates, several Companions in Mercy, over 600 Mercy Volunteer Corps alumni, and hundreds of co-workers in Mercy-sponsored programs and institutions also share in our mission, following the example of Mercy foundress, Catherine McAuley. For more information on how to join us in standing in solidarity with immigrants, go to <http://www.sistersofmercy.org/justice/immigration>.

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