

We, the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, compelled by the Gospel and by our heritage to be responsive to the "dear neighbor" without distinction, call on President Bush and the 2007-08 Congress to enact immigration policy that is both just and comprehensive. We believe that this policy must include:

- a pathway to lawful permanent residence and citizenship
- a process to reduce the backlog of family visas in order to ensure family unity and reunification
- a guestworker program that ensures labor protections and equitable wages
- a border security and enforcement policy that is humane
- a process whereby students who are children of undocumented families can earn a college degree and become gainfully employed. We must remember that these children are here through no fault of their own; and their only desire is to become a citizen of the nation in which they have grown up.

In our faith response to welcome the stranger among us, we urge Congress and the Administration to work for an immigration system that respects the dignity of every person. Our Catholic tradition emphasizes that all persons, regardless of their legal status, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. The basic human rights of persons who are undocumented and need to be respected in all government policies.

We, 14,000 Catholic Sisters and associates, in over 50 countries recognize that no immigration policy will be complete without addressing the root causes of migration. Our sisters in other countries witness conditions of impetus for migration. We have seen and know that poverty causes people to do whatever is necessary for themselves and their families to survive. The economic injustices that exist in the developing countries must be a focus of concern in addressing the immigration issue.

Trade agreements which favor corporations increase poverty in developing countries. These agreements eliminate tariffs that provide revenue for poor governments. Imported U.S. subsidized crops put farmers in poor countries out of business. Poverty around the world is forcing an exodus of peoples from their homelands in order to live. By signing on to the Millennium Development Goals, the United States has pledged to work toward eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. An immigration policy that is humane and compassionate must address these root causes of migration.

The Gospel message is clear: we are called to share our resources and gifts with our brothers and sisters in need! As Sisters of St. Joseph, we take seriously our call to welcome the stranger as our brothers and sisters. As citizens, we urge President Bush and the 2007-08 Congress to enact an immigration policy that is reflective of the fundamental values of justice and dignity.