

Maryknoll leadership statement on U.S. immigration

Every day, in every corner of the planet, women and men walk across national borders to find work, to find shelter, to find safety, to reunite with their families. From Zimbabwe to Thailand to Guatemala to the U.S.-Mexico border, Maryknoll missionaries often interact with people on the move. We know their names and have heard their pleas for justice.

Our charism as Catholic missionaries calls us to emphasize global solidarity. We respect the United States' obligation to keep its citizens safe, but we resist short-sighted, misguided and pitiless methods that do not provide authentic security, but rather foment fear and distrust.

As Maryknoll missionaries, we have observed first-hand the economic "push" factors in sending countries that endanger lives, families and cultures. We understand flight from violence and war. We implore U.S. lawmakers to consider the multi-layered dimensions of the migration issue when contemplating just immigration policies.

As Maryknoll missionaries, we deplore the fear of the "other" that is embedded in these anti-migrant laws. We applaud Los Angeles' Roger Cardinal Mahony for his willingness to defy civil law in favor of a higher law that focuses upon the basic human rights of immigrants.

As Maryknoll missionaries, we feel compelled to join the chorus of voices who are calling on Congress to reject any legislation that not only criminalizes undocumented persons in this country but also those who provide them with humanitarian aid. These potential laws violate the U.S. identity as a gathering place for all the world's peoples; these laws contradict a deeply felt national adage which announces that the U.S. will receive the poor, the tired, the huddled masses.

Approved March 30, 2006 by the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers General Council, Maryknoll Sisters Congregational Leadership Team, and the Maryknoll Lay Missioners Association Leadership Team.