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CONTACT: Will Youmans, CLINIC
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.
510-388-6670
wyoumans@cliniclegal.org

David Stout
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
202-541-3224
dstout@usccb.org

COMMENDATION TO BE GIVEN BY THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS TO CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF GALVESTON-HOUSTON FOR WORK WITH UNACCOMPANIED MINORS AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

October 18, 2006, Washington DC— In an effort to fully examine the plight of unaccompanied migrant children and victims of human trafficking as symptoms of the outdated and broken immigration system currently employed by the United States, a delegation of Catholic bishops will visit Houston on October 25th and 26th. The visit is part of a larger week-long trip that will also include Tucson, AZ, El Paso, TX and their neighboring border communities in Mexico.

Members of the delegation include Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes, Bishop of San Bernardino, California, Chairman of the USCCB Migration Committee, Most Reverend Armando Ochoa, Bishop of El Paso, Texas, member of USCCB Migration Committee and Most Reverend Jaime Soto, Auxiliary Bishop of Orange, California, representing the Board of Directors of the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC).

In addition to visiting with various representatives from government entities such as the US Department of Homeland Security and other community based organizations, the bishops will visit St. Michael's Home for Children and St. Jerome Emiliani's Home for Children, two local shelters that provide housing and social services to unaccompanied minors and human trafficking victims. Both of these homes are run by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston and a ceremony will be held where Most Reverend Daniel N. Dinardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston, will receive a commendation from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops on behalf of Catholic Charities of Galveston-Houston for their work with these homes.

The commendation ceremony will take place between the delegation's visits to St. Michael's Home for Children and St. Jerome Emiliani's Home for Children, in Conference Room A of the Downtown Chancery of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, 1700 San Jacinto, Houston, TX at 3:00pm on Wednesday, Oct. 25th. All press is invited to attend the commendation ceremony where the bishops will be available for interviews. If you would like to set up an interview, please contact David Stout at 202-541-3224 or Will Youmans, who will be traveling with the delegation, at 510-388-6670. A live blog that will chronicle the whole trip with interviews and photographs will be updated daily by a delegation member and can be found at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

About the Catholic Church and Immigration Reform

The Catholic Church has historically held a strong interest in immigration and how public policy affects immigrants seeking a new life in the United States. Based on Catholic social teaching, the Catholic Church is compelled to raise its voice on behalf of those who are marginalized and whose God-given rights are not respected.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States, Mexico and Central America have called for comprehensive immigration reform that addresses the root causes of migration, provides worker protection and a pathway to citizenship, reunites families in a timely manner and more effectively utilizes resources to address security concerns.

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