Sisters of Saint Joseph™
CHESTNUT HILL • PHILADELPHIA

# The Leadership Team's ...

## *Response to U.S. Administration's Proposed Plans for the Central American Migrant Caravan*

November 2, 2018

Continuing our tradition of solidarity with immigrants, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, live the Gospel values in which Jesus taught that, "As far as you did for the least of my brothers and sisters you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). As Women Religious, our mission is "to live and work so that all people may be united with God and with one another." Dignity of the person, mutuality and justice are core to our Christian beliefs.

In our present situation regarding the migrant caravan from Central America, we are disheartened by the deterioration and lack of centrality of these Gospel values. These migrants are courageous people who have rejected cultures of corruption and exploitation. They are traveling the same road trod by our fore-bearers who fled tyranny and violence in search of the American dream. They are people of hope and promise who only want the opportunity to contribute their toil and talent to this nation.

We support this dream that is filled with hope for a nation united in service of the common good. We stand with Pope Francis who calls us "to promote and the dignity of all our brothers and sisters, particularly the poor and the excluded of society, those who are abandoned, immigrants and those who suffer violence and human trafficking."

The United States has a long and proud history of welcoming immigrants and sheltering refugees. Women Religious have been blessed to be able to accompany and serve migrant communities across this country. We will continue to welcome them as our national history demands and our faith requires.

We urge the administration to manage refugee arrivals humanely and in a manner that respects their dignity and rights under U.S. and International law and to:

- Allow migrants to approach our border and ask for protection in the United States and be admitted for processing in a timely manner.
- Ensure that asylum seekers have access to legal counsel and receive a fair resolution of their claim.
- Guarantee that parents and children stay together after they are apprehended. Holding families indefinitely in detention or detaining parents while releasing their children violates the values of this nation and the standards set forth in the Flores settlement.
- Abstain from detaining of those awaiting adjudication of their asylum petitions in favor of alternatives that are more humane and more cost efficient.
- Direct Homeland Security to cooperate with faith-based and humanitarian organizations that are prepared to assist asylum-seekers.

*The Sisters of Saint Joseph Chestnut Hill - Philadelphia's mission is "to live and work so that all people may be united with God and with one another." We are a Congregation of almost 700 Women Religious who minister in 12 states and Canada. We trace our roots from Le Puy, France (1650) and arrived in Philadelphia in 1847. Our response to the needs of the people of God is characterized by a cordial and hospitable spirit, a willing heart ready for any good work, a quiet sense of hiddenness, coupled with a desire to serve to the best of our ability. The Congregation's sponsored works include Academy Village; Bethlehem Village; Cecilian Village; Chestnut Hill College; Saint Joseph Academy; Mount Saint Joseph Academy; Norwood-Fontbonne Academy; Saint Joseph Villa; Saint Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House; SSJ Earth Center; SSJ Neighborhood Center; Saint Joseph Village; and the SSJ Welcome Center.*