SSJ Corporate Stand FAQ

What is a corporate stand?

A corporate stand is a voiced belief of a body of people. It is a deliberate public statement and commitment to action by a group with regard to an issue of human concerns, Gospel values and/or ecclesial, social systems. It follows a formal process that includes education and reflection, and concludes with the consent of the members of the group. A corporate stand is one way the congregation uses its corporate voice.

Why are the Sisters of Saint Joseph adopting this Corporate Stand in Solidarity with Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers?

The Sisters of Saint Joseph have sought to respond to the needs of the times with courage, creativity and compassion since their founding. The Sisters of Saint Joseph recognize that the plight of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers is one of the defining moral challenges of our age. Families are torn apart, human dignity is denied, and fear of the "other" is used as a strategy to divide communities. In the midst of this reality, the Sisters of Saint Joseph hear again the Gospel invitation and their founders' call to become instruments of unioning love with God and with one another. Compelled by love for God and the dear neighbor, the Sisters of Saint Joseph commit themselves to stand in solidarity with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers here in the United States and throughout the world. [Source: Corporate Stand in Solidarity with Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, May 1, 2026]

How is this corporate stand connected to the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph?

This corporate stand is deeply rooted in the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph: to live and work so that all people may be united with God and with one another. In responding to the urgent realities facing immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the Sisters affirm that their work for justice and welcome is not separate from the vitality of their vowed life, but is a direct expression of it.

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Can you describe the meaning of the terms immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers?

An immigrant is someone who makes a decision to leave their country of origin, and moves to a different country. They may be seeking employment, education, family reunification, better opportunities for their children, leaving poverty, or leaving for many other reasons. People may also move to another country temporarily, such as in the case of seasonal farm workers.

Refugees are people who have been forced to flee from their home country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on nationality, race, religion, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group if they return to their home country. Obtaining "refugee status" involves a rigorous process of vetting before being accepted into a new host country.

Asylum seekers are people seeking protection from danger in their home country, but their claim for refugee status has not been determined before migrating. Asylum seekers must declare they are seeking this status in their new country and then go through an often long legal process. Seeking asylum is a fundamental human right, recognized under international law (Article 14 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights). However, the legal process for seeking asylum has been severely restricted and effectively banned at the southern border of the United States, despite the fact that the leadership of the United States helped to create, build and adopt the universal human rights standard in the aftermath of the Holocaust and World War II.

Sources:

- Catholic Charities USA
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Appeals court rules that Trump's asylum ban at the border is illegal (The Associated Press, April 24, 2026)

What other corporate stands have the Sisters of Saint Joseph adopted?

The Sisters of Saint Joseph have adopted three other corporate stands regarding the following social justice issues: Apartheid (1988), the Death Penalty (1998) and Human Trafficking (2008). These corporate stands can be found on the website https://ssjphila.org.

How are SSJ Associates in Mission, Partners in Mission and people of good will included in the SSJ corporate stands?

Because Associates in Mission and Partners in Mission support the charism and work of the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the Sisters of Saint Joseph invite Associates and Partners in Mission and all people of good will to stand with them as they commit to these principles and actions that will offer a future full of hope for all who are seeking welcome and a home in these United States. We are grateful for this shared mission calling us to remain faithful, fostering unity in our prophetic presence, while honoring the dignity and rights of the dear neighbor.

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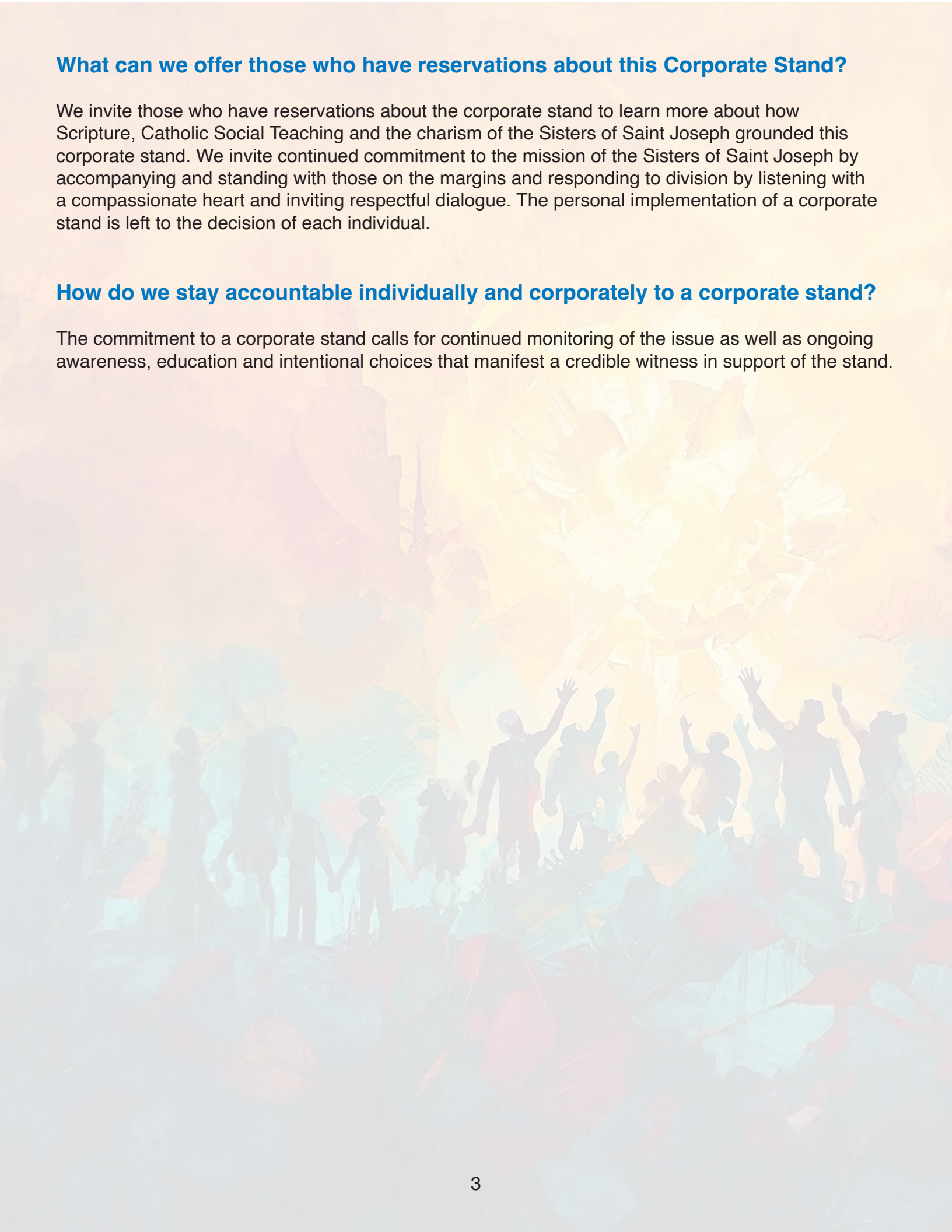
What can we offer those who have reservations about this Corporate Stand?

We invite those who have reservations about the corporate stand to learn more about how Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching and the charism of the Sisters of Saint Joseph grounded this corporate stand. We invite continued commitment to the mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph by accompanying and standing with those on the margins and responding to division by listening with a compassionate heart and inviting respectful dialogue. The personal implementation of a corporate stand is left to the decision of each individual.

How do we stay accountable individually and corporately to a corporate stand?

The commitment to a corporate stand calls for continued monitoring of the issue as well as ongoing awareness, education and intentional choices that manifest a credible witness in support of the stand.