

Welcoming the Immigrants We Once Were



Ten communities of Catholic Sisters of the Upper Mississippi River Valley join together to call upon President Obama and Congress to work together to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

We make this call in affirmation of our Catholic tradition that holds sacred the dignity of each person. We also recognize our immigrant history in a nation established by the rich contributions of generations of immigrants and migrants.

Today, we are witnessing the violation of human rights under our current immigration policies, particularly in the separation of families due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids and unjust detentions. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

Failure on the part of the federal government to reform the present unworkable system has resulted in states passing legislation that is punitive and harmful to human rights AND IS based upon inaccurate information and assumptions.

We understand that enforcement of law is part of any immigration policy. However, the present policy of involving state and local law enforcement agencies in the enforcement of federal immigration law, such as in the Secure Communities program, has resulted in abuses and the undermining of the trust between immigrant communities and the law enforcement agencies which is necessary to ensure public safety.

Therefore, we declare ourselves “Immigrant Welcoming Communities.” We do this because we know that true security lies in building relationships and respecting human rights. We invite other communities and people of faith to join us in becoming Immigrant Welcoming Communities through prayer, reflection, education and action.

Please join in broadening the effort of forming “Immigrant Welcoming Communities” by:

Exploring your Faith

Start with your faith. Have an opening session with a core group from your worshipping community to learn about what your faith says about welcoming immigrants and how to talk about immigration issues. Through prayer and religious practice, find ways to be present with our immigrant sisters and brothers and in solidarity with them.

Education and Relationships for Transformation

Host an education event for a larger group in your worshipping community. Include factual information about the current immigration laws, contributions of immigrants, common myths or misunderstandings about immigrants, and the underlying causes of immigration. Most importantly, education events should include interaction with families that are affected.

Action

Find ways to reach out to and welcome immigrants within your faith community and wider community. Declare your faith community an “Immigrant Welcoming Community.” Work for comprehensive immigration reform. Work for suspension of the so-called Secure Communities program.

Affirming Your Commitment

Have a service that blesses and affirms your worshipping community’s commitment to being an “Immigrant Welcoming Community” that engages the larger community, celebrates a team of leaders who will help carry the ministry forward, and commit to be a part of the wider interfaith movement working for immigrant justice.

For more information on how to join this effort and explore how you and your organization or community can get involved, please contact:

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Sponsored by:

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