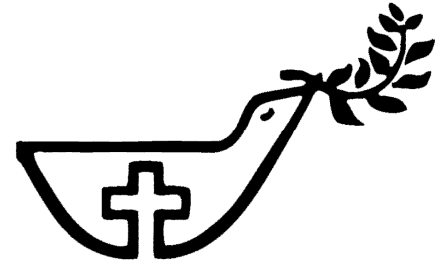


# 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice Declares Sanctuary and Releases Statement on Migration



## As a member of Chicago New Sanctuary Coalition and New Sanctuary Movement

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8th Day Center for Justice, a faith-based organization grounded in the Catholic tradition, declares itself a New Sanctuary Organization. We stand in solidarity with our migrant sisters and brothers, particularly with those who are the most vulnerable in today's climate of raids, criminalization and highly politicized debate. We stand with the undocumented and recent immigrant communities. Our scripture and tradition of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) emphasizes welcoming migrants and honoring their human dignity, always extending hospitality to the stranger, the hungry, and the exploited among us.

Today, people crossing into the United States of America "are among the most abused, exploited and denigrated people in our society" (1), and we believe that to ignore them is to ignore the call of the gospel. CST instructs us that "globalization, like any other system, must be at the service of the human person; it must serve solidarity and the common good (11)" and that "a just trading system should enhance the life and dignity of everyone, lessen economic injustice, and help eradicate poverty (12)."

*"The obligation to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow also presumes a right to do so. A society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view." (Centesimus Annus #43)*

### In Response:

8th Day Center for Justice publicly declares itself a New Sanctuary Organization. From the historical understanding of sanctuary as a sacred place for protection from injustice and persecution, the 1980s sanctuary movement to today -- a call has been made for a New Sanctuary Movement in urgent response to the current failures of the immigration system in the United States.

*"Sanctuary is not a building. It is a response rooted in faith and nurtured by prayer and conscience (10)."*

### As a New Sanctuary Organization:

"We stand together in believing that every human person, regardless of national origin, has basic rights which must be safeguarded, including:

- 1) The right to earn a livelihood;
- 2) The right to family unity; and
- 3) The right to physical and emotional safety.

We believe that these undeniable rights are being violated under current immigration law." (6)

8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice calls for the promotion of just economic policies, the decriminalization of migrants and the removal of punitive legislation and procedures.

We ask you to stand with 8<sup>th</sup> Day and declare sanctuary as a congregation, community or organization. The following pages map out the different aspects of Migration and are important educational tools for reflection, discussion or debate pertaining to immigration.

### **Economic Roots of Migration**

The current model of free trade agreements favors profit over people. For example, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was envisioned as an open-market trade union between the United States, Mexico and Canada. In theory, this partnership reflects other trade unions like the European Union. In practice, however, NAFTA is distinctly different.

Unlike the European Union, which allows for the free movement of goods, capital and people between participating nations, NAFTA only allows for the free exchange of goods and capital while deliberately restricting the movement of people. As a result, those most negatively influenced by the new trade agreement are forced into economic desperation because they are unable to freely move to where work is most available.

Furthermore, not only does NAFTA lack any requirements for worker rights, labor mobility, or environmental standards, the advantages of free trade are unevenly distributed as well. While NAFTA encouraged Mexico to stop providing subsidies to rural farmers, the United States government continues to sustain the powerful U.S. agri-business through massive subsidies which have not only raised food prices worldwide but have also given small Mexican farmers few options aside from migration.

### **Human Migration is a Global Phenomenon**

The movement of people, both within a nation state and externally between countries, is a global and historic phenomenon. Migration is understood in terms of push and pull factors. Push factors are the factors of out-migration, such as the economic or social pressures that encourage or force people to emigrate. Pull factors are the factors of in-migration, such as the economic or social pressures that lead people to immigrate.

Migration occurs for a variety of reasons, which include but are not limited to:

Conflict-Induced – forced to leave due to armed conflict, civil war, violence and persecution.

Development-Induced – forced to move due to projects or policies ex: dams, roads, airports etc.

Disaster-Induced – forced to move due to natural disasters, global climate change, or human made disasters.

([www.forcedmigration.org](http://www.forcedmigration.org))

“The number of international migrants around the world has expanded very rapidly over the past decade. According to a policy analyst for the UN refugee agency, current estimates indicate that 200 million people around the world are now living outside the country in which they were born: ‘And all of the current projections suggest that because of differentials in living standards and human security in different parts of the world, the number of people seeking to leave their own country and move to another country or another part of the world will continue to increase in the years to come’.”(<http://www.un.org/radio/story.asp?NewsID=5224>)

In the United States the debate on immigration policies has been significantly focused on one ethnic group. This limited scope continues to ignore the global perspective necessary to address the multitude of issues surrounding human migration and immigration policies.

### **Family Unity**

The majority of those who come to the United States are motivated by family. Whether it is to reunite with family members or to ensure the survival of their family in their country of origin, people make the journey. As border enforcement increases, family reunification becomes more difficult and dangerous. Often family members never know what happens to their loved ones and are left to wonder about them for many years or indefinitely.

Even children are crossing the border some with their families, others alone and still others are trafficked. Too often their human rights are violated. "They are routinely treated foremost as “illegal immigrants” rather than children entitled to and in need of protection. The routine and widespread use of detention with migrant children is not only in itself often a breach of international obligations but may lead to additional abuses if migrant children are mixed with adult or criminal populations or subjected to punitive measures such as solitary confinement. Detention often results in additional restrictions on their right to education and on their assistance needs as a result of trauma, abuse, neglect and exploitation (9)."

The issue of family unity also is paramount in the discussion of raids and deportation. Many children who are citizens are left behind without a parent or even an opportunity to say good-bye. This leaves them in a state of fear and uncertainty.

Family members who are left behind are forced to carry the burden of sustaining the family both financially and emotionally.

The Postville, Iowa raid on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 left a community of 2,200 with nearly 300 people serving prison sentences before their eventual deportation. Many families were separated, detained and imprisoned. In some cases both parents were detained. Postville, like many communities, has been greatly affected by the raid and continues to be plagued by fear and racism.

### **Detention Abuses and Due Process Violations**

While by law, immigrants are to be held in non-criminal detention facilities, the practice used by the U.S. government (both in the U.S. and globally) is significantly different. “The U.S. government detains over 280,000 people a year – more than triple the number of people in detention just nine years ago – in a hodgepodge of over 400 facilities at an annual cost of more than \$1.2 billion.”

Despite the fact that many immigrant detainees should be in non-criminal custody, detainees are placed in general prison populations, endure inhumane detention conditions and suffer preventable deaths. Detainees complain consistently about the severe lack of access to basic medical care, no use of phones, physical and verbal abuse, inedible food, overcrowding, and limited access to religious counsel. (15)

*“Immigrants in detention include many vulnerable individuals, including asylum seekers, asylees, victims of trafficking, the sick and elderly, the disabled, pregnant women, and children. Detention has been shown to contribute to these detainees’ depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. These immigrants are kept in detention despite the fact that they do not pose flight risks or any threat to society” (15)*

While the average cost of detaining an immigrant is \$95 per person/ per day, less expensive alternatives do exist. These generally include a combination of reporting and electronic monitoring, both of which are effective and significantly cheaper, with some programs costing as little as \$12 per day.

Immigrants have been found to have been detained without charge, denied bond, denied access to counsel, subjected to physical and mental abuse, and held for lengthy periods of time without trial, even though two United States Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2005 declared that immigrants in detention can only be held for up to 180 days.

Not only are immigrants subjected to inhumane periods of detention, they are kept in this state while knowing there is little hope of a fair trial before their deportation because immigrants do not have rights to a public attorney.

### **The Growth of Private Prisons and Detention Profiteering**

“The [Bush] administration expects that about 27,500 immigrants will be in detention each night, an increase of 6,700 over the current number in custody. At the average cost these days of \$95 a night, that adds up to an estimated total annual cost of nearly \$1 billion.”

“With all the federal centers now filled and the federal government not planning to build more, most of the new money is expected to go to private companies or to county governments. Even some of the money paid to counties, which currently hold 57 percent of the immigrants in detention, will end up in the pockets of the private companies, since they manage a number of the county jails.” Two of the leading private security firms are the Corrections Corporation of America and the Geo Group (formerly the Wackenhut Corrections Corporation).

“Wall Street has taken notice of the potential growth in the industry. The stock of Corrections Corp. has climbed to \$53.77 from \$42.50, an increase of about 27 percent, since February when President Bush proposed adding to spending on immigrant detention.” New York Times <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/19/business/19detain.html>

The growth of private contractors raises other pertinent concerns. The shift from public to private will result in lower wages, less job security and lost job benefits. Of equal concern is the loss of public oversight and accountability.

### **Racial Profiling**

Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) defines racial profiling as, “the targeting of individuals and groups by law enforcement officials, even partially, on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion, except when there is trustworthy information, relevant to the locality and time frame, that links persons belonging to one of the aforementioned groups to an identified criminal incident or scheme.”

US Senator Menendez (D-NJ) has created legislation to prevent the unlawful detention of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. He states, “The legitimate desire to get control over our borders has too often turned into a witch-hunt against Hispanic Americans and other people of color.”

Racial profiling has created an environment of fear and isolation in all recent immigrant communities. The Mexican and Latin American communities have been the most obvious targets portrayed by the media. All communities, however, with recent immigrant populations are being significantly affected.

### **The Militarization of the U.S./ Mexico Border**

Securing the border regions has continually been escalating with several layers including local and state police, Border Patrol, private security firms, National Guard and U.S. Military. The Bush administration has increased the number of border patrol agents from 9,000 to 15,000, with another 3,000 to be added by the time Bush leaves office. Funding for border security initiatives has increased under Bush from \$4.8 billion in 2001 to \$12.3 billion this year, and plans call for having 670 miles of enhanced border fence in place by the end of Bush's presidency. (World Politics Review <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/article.aspx?id=1735>)

Not only does this funnel significant funds away from much needed social services but it also impacts the community on a spiritual and psychological level, regardless of status. The increased militarization has significantly impacted communities along the border where their presence has become commonplace. The increased militarized response can also be seen as a growing phenomena spreading to other parts of the country, including local police acting as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. The vigilante groups such as the Minutemen or Civilian Homeland Defense who have taken matters into their own hands adds another layer to this complex border system.

The flow of migrants has not decreased. The new policies have been ineffective and have simply succeeded in forcing migrants into the most dangerous and inhumane stretches of the border where death has become a much more frequent occurrence. Also, there has been a significant shift from a catch and release of people who are undocumented to a practice of catch, detain, and criminalize. This has only increased the number of people in detention centers and has done nothing to address the situation.

### **Border Violence and Death**

We have a human rights tragedy on our hands at the US/Mexico border. Of those that are crossing the border, the players include organized crime, drug smugglers, human trafficking, coyotes, and regular people making the journey. With the increase militarization, coupled with all the players, the border has become a place of violence and death.

“The official statistics compiled by the U.S. Border Patrol consistently undercounts the actual number of deaths in Arizona and elsewhere along the U.S.-Mexico border. But various academic and government studies estimate that the bodies of between 2,000 and 3,000 men, women, and children have been found along the entire southwest border since 1995, including at least 1,000 in the inhospitable terrain of southern Arizona. Experts, including the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), now explain this crisis as a direct consequence of U.S. immigration-control policies instituted in the mid-1990s.”

People die in the desert from dehydration, hypothermia, heat exhaustion and other medical complications. Many migrants are also severely injured or in need of permanent medical attention, for example, kidney dialysis. In the areas along the Rio Grande people are found drowned.

To decide to cross in many cases is a life and death decision with life, and death consequences. There is a lot at stake and even with all the risks and threats to one's life there is still, for some, no other choice for persons or their families to survive.

### **Pathway to Citizenship and Economic Barriers**

According to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the naturalization process required to become a U.S. Citizen costs \$675. This amount consists of a \$595 fee to file the naturalization application and another \$80 biometrics fee for photographs, fingerprints, and signatures. This money must be paid in the form of a check or money order from a U.S. bank; no cash is accepted. All money is non-refundable, even if the application is withdrawn or citizenship is not granted. The \$675 dollar amount is really the bare minimum. If you have lost your Permanent Resident Card or Green Card, which is necessary for the naturalization application and process, there is an additional fee of \$290 to replace the card.

If you are trying to obtain citizenship for your child, a whole host of other applications that cost money are required. If an applicant wishes to request premium processing services, this costs an additional \$1,000. If an applicant wishes to request a hearing on a decision in naturalization proceedings, the application costs \$605. The naturalization process has a great deal of fine print to read and is quite costly all together. (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services <http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis>)

The increase in cost for filing for citizenship and visas has only impacted those people who have low income. There have been instances of runs on banks in immigrant communities especially following a raid. With the recent and significant price increase for legal routes to citizenship and the longer waits to gain access, this will lead to fewer people being willing and able to follow this route.

To follow the legal route of entrance and the pathway toward citizenship takes more than money; it also is significant time consuming and complicated. It is often taken for granted how difficult it is to navigate this system when English is not one's first language. The amount of time which it takes can vary significantly and differs depending on what is your country of origin. The process for Visas is limited and by lottery. The citizenship process is backlogged and can be up to 20 years for some countries.

### **The Role of Debt**

The flow of migrants typically occurs from poor, highly indebted countries into wealthy countries. Governments of indebted countries are held to unjust debt payments on loans made irresponsibly, oftentimes to corrupt former regimes, while the majority of their population cannot meet their most basic needs. (13)

"Debt is one factor in the inability of impoverished country governments to provide an adequate social safety net and a safe environment. Indebtedness can be seen as part of a cluster of 'push factors' in immigration."

"Debt cancellation is one measure that would give impoverished country governments a better chance of providing basic services, like health care and education. Combined with new approaches to trade, investment, and aid, it could help many developing countries reduce the economic pressures that drive migration." (Jubilee USA [http://www.jubileeusa.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Resources/Policy\\_Archive/BorderCrossings.pdf](http://www.jubileeusa.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Resources/Policy_Archive/BorderCrossings.pdf))

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