

Marianist Statement on Immigration

Approved by the Marianist Family Council of No. America March 12, 2011

The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative urges all members of the Marianist Family, and all Marianist communities, both religious and lay, to join in the call of the Church to become educated and active in bringing about comprehensive immigration reform. Pope Benedict XVI and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops call for a just system of laws on immigration in keeping with the Sacred Scripture tradition of unity in the Body of Christ. Specifically, we invite you to discuss the following statement, become more informed and involved about these issues, and advocate in your communities and ministries for a just change. More information can be found at the MSJC Racial & Immigrant Justice website - <http://www.msjc.net/AntiRacism/default.aspx>.

The Marianist Social Justice Collaborative is deeply concerned about the lack of compassion for immigrants in the current debates about immigration policy, especially in the United States. We acknowledge the obligation of governments to protect their citizens and to maintain appropriate control over borders. However, the eyes of faith impel us to resist short-sighted solutions that do not provide real security. Migration is an historical human process around the globe, and many migrants are poor people who are primarily seeking jobs and opportunities to better provide for their families. As a Marianist family, we take as our model the Holy Family, who experienced exile and homelessness due to unjust laws, and so are called to careful reflection on how we can be part of the solutions to our current social problems around issues of migration.

Embracing the spirit of Mary's Magnificat in the Gospel of Luke, when she proclaims God's favor toward the poor, the powerless and the marginalized, we believe that a just immigration policy must include:

- Means for earned legalization with a pathway to citizenship for those who desire it;
- Support for maintaining family unity and encouraging family reunification among immigrants;
- Provisions to combat exploitative labor practices;
- An effective border security policy that is both just and humane.

We call on our leaders at every level of government and church to address the root causes of immigration, especially trade and international economic policies which undermine the ability of farmers and poor people in developing countries to make a decent living and deprive them of their human rights. People in developing countries who cannot survive economically, sometimes due to economic policies which do not account for the impact on the poor, may find it necessary to migrate to places where jobs are available. Only a comprehensive approach to immigration reform, rather than one that focuses on strengthening border security and harsh enforcement, can accomplish the kind of immigration policy that is just and compassionate.