

June 27, 2016

His Holiness Pope Francis
Bishop of Rome
Apostolic Palace
Vatican City State 00120

Your Holiness,

"This crisis which can be measured in numbers and statistics, we want instead to measure with names, stories, families." Pope Francis, Ciudad Juarez Mexico, Feb 18, 2016

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace united our voices to welcome immigrants and refugees as sisters and brothers and to denounce divisive political rhetoric in a statement released for our Founder's Day and prior to World Refugee Day on June 20. The formal congregational statement entitled: *Welcome Immigrants and Refugees* (attached) is the product of five months of prayer and reflection by our sisters and associates in the U.K. and in the U.S.

We are sending this to you so you know how we are being disturbed by the Spirit. It was our own founder's experience to serve immigrants as she herself was an immigrant. The statement reflects our charism and tradition while addressing the current crisis following our chapter Call of 2014 "to a deeper and wider living of community for mission in company with poor and marginalized people." Your words quoted above speak to us of that call "to recommit ourselves to Jesus' way of radical hospitality."

Whether welcoming immigrants from the Southern border of the U.S., or the tens of thousands of Syrians, Afghans, or North Africans who are fleeing their homes for the EU, we are challenged to remember that we are all sisters and brothers who share a common home. We are asked to resist those instincts and influences from society that would have us turn our faces away.

Consistent with our charism to seek peace through justice, *Welcome Immigrants and Refugees* urges governments to look to the causes of forced migration such as economic inequality, war, arms sales, and excessive use of fossil fuels that are causing seas to rise and forcing island peoples out of their homes.

Please pray with us that the words of the statement take root in our hearts and in the hearts of those who lead. "Deeper mutual support enables us to take risks for justice, peace and the integrity of creation." *Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace Chapter Call, 2014*

Blessings of peace,



Sr. Sheila Lemieux, CSJP, Congregation Leader