



# **Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace**

*Pursuing justice, we seek God's gift of peace.*

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Sisters Urge UK and US Governments to Protect Human Rights of Immigrants and Refugees**

On this 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we want to remind the governments of the UK and the US, that actions like the passage of the Nationality and Borders Bill as well as the US government's continued use of Title 42 and the so-called Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) violate both the spirit and the letter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights we celebrate today. The above-mentioned policies are cruel and put migrants at risk of physical and mental injury and or death as they are denied the basic rights agreed to be offered by a humane community of nations. The lies of leaders who call their nations "compassionate" while watching asylum seekers drown off the British coast or be exploited by gangs on the Mexican side of the US border must be called out.

This year we are reminded by the UN that we are "All Human, All Equal." As Catholics we believe that is so because we are all made in the image and likeness of our Creator. The world community has acknowledged that again and again and many nations are striving to live out that reality. The elected leaders of some nations, sadly, do not act on that truth.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace wish to republish our Congregational Statement of 2016, "Welcome Immigrants and Refugees" on this date as the conditions of so many asylum seekers and other migrants continue to deteriorate.

### **Welcome Immigrants and Refugees**

The sisters and associates of the Congregation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace want to express our grave concern for refugees, asylum seekers, and our migrant brothers and sisters. Our Congregation "had its origin in the founder's response to the social concerns and needs of the time." (Constitution 4) At our founding, we were a congregation of immigrants, serving immigrants, knowing their pain and suffering.

We believe that we are all brothers and sisters and that everyone has the right to be treated with human dignity. Earth is a gift of our Creator to be shared by all of Earth's families, not just by those who claim to own a piece of it. Nations have the right to

control immigration and an obligation to provide safety for citizens, but they do not have the right to close borders to all refugees and asylum seekers who are in need.

Therefore, we urge:

- all governments to follow international law and expeditiously provide safe haven for refugees and asylum seekers with all rights guaranteed in the UN Convention and Protocol on Refugees
- the U.S. and U.K. governments to allow citizens willing to serve refugees the opportunity to offer hospitality as an expression of their faith
- an immediate end to all rhetoric that instills fear, creates division, or incites violence, regardless of the migrant's faith or nation of origin.

As a Congregation committed to peace through justice, we know addressing the present crisis is not enough. To find a truly peaceful resolution we must repent of our own actions and call attention to national policies that are the root causes of forced migration. Among these policies are: the creation of great divergence of wealth among and within nations, our acceptance of war and sales of weapons to nations already in turmoil, our excessive dependence on fossil fuels and the resultant displacement forced by rising seas.

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace (June 5, 2016)

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