



**St. Francis**  
community services

# Catholic Social Teaching For All People of Faith

What You Need to Know to  
Advocate for a Moral Response

SFCS/Southside 314-773-6100

SFCS/Catholic Legal Assistance Ministry 314-977-3993

# United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

- In 2003 USCCB and Mexico issue a joint pastoral letter: *Stranger No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*
- In 2004 USCCB committed to immigration reform as a priority and to create a culture of welcome in which all migrants are treated with dignity and respect

# Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration and the Movement of Peoples

- Three basic principles on Immigration
- <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm>

# First Principle

- People have the right to migrate to sustain their lives and the lives of their families
  - Every person has the right to receive from the earth what is necessary for life:
    - Food
    - Clothing
    - Shelter
    - Education
    - Medical care
    - Religion
    - Expression of one's culture
    - And to be free of fear, danger and dehumanizing poverty

# Second Principle

- A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration
  - each person must act with the common good of all people as his or her guiding principle
  - no Country is bound to accept all that those that wish to resettle here
  - USCCB urges the understanding that people do not leave their own land and culture just to seek adventure; instead they migrate out of desperation and in search of safety

# Third Principle

- A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy
  - All Catholic Social Teaching must be understood in light of the absolute equality of all people and the commitment to the common good
  - Regulations of borders and control of immigration **MUST** be governed
    - by Concern for All People
    - by Mercy and Justice

# CONCERN FOR COMMON GOOD WITH MERCY AND JUSTICE

- A NATION MAY NOT SIMPLY DECIDE THAT IT WANTS TO PROVIDE FOR ITS OWN PEOPLE AND NO OTHERS
- <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm>

# USCCB: Justice for Immigrants

- Primary objectives:
  - To educate the public about Catholic Social teaching on migration and immigrants
  - To create a political will for just and humane immigration reform
  - To advocate for just and fair reforms in U.S. immigration and refugee laws and policies that reflect USCCB principles
  - <https://justiceforimmigrants.org>

# Family Separation and Family Detention

- The retraction of the EO did not end family detention, did not address the best interest of children and families and is inconsistent with case law.
  - Flores v. Loretta Lynch:
  - The government is required to release children from immigration detention without unnecessary delay to, in order of preference, parents, other adult relatives, or licensed programs willing to accept custody.
  - If a suitable placement is not immediately available, the government is obligated to place children in the “least restrictive” setting appropriate to their age and any special needs.
  - The government must implement standards relating to the care and treatment of children in immigration detention.

# SB 3036: A Moral Response with Mercy and Justice

- Elements of the bill:
  - Require all agents and officers be given evidence-based training to make those decisions “with an emphasis on the best interests of the child, childhood trauma, attachment, and child development.”
  - Require public guidance, in English and Spanish, instructing parents on how to locate their child in the event of separation. It would also require that separated parents be given a monthly update on the activities, health, and immigration status of their child.
  - Require an annual report with details on each case of separation, as well as a Government Accountability Office study on the prosecution of asylum seekers from 2008 to 2018.

# Let's work to end all family detention

- Family Detention is Costly (\$2 billion a year)
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommending that immigrant children seeking safe haven should not be placed in detention centers. Such stress could trigger life long symptoms of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder from detention. (Numbers show over 3,700 children separated: <https://theintercept.com/2018/06/19/children-separated-from-parents-family-separation-immigration/>)
- Community Based Alternative to Detention (see handout)

# Other Pending Legislation

- At last count there were 302 bills pending dealing with immigrations (<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/immigration/6206>)
  - Including:
    - Speaker Ryan's Bill HR 6136
    - Senator Cruz' Bill S. 3091
- Overwhelming but what is important is for you to be able to articulate why you are in support or not in support of any pending legislation.

# Talking Points

- We call for immigration and policies to uphold family unity and denounce any sort of family separation
- We oppose family detention as being trauma inducing for children, asylum seekers, or any attempt to hold families indefinitely
- We call for access to legal counsel for all immigrants including asylum seekers
- Lack of due process at the border, restrictions on access to protection, separation of families and family detention do not further our faith principle

# What can you do to help

- Host a discussion group and invite your faith leaders and friends to attend
- Be proactive:
  - Call write email your Congressman (we will be emailing you contact information and talking points)
- Educate yourself:
  - Connect with MIRA (Missouri Immigrant and Refugee Advocates) <http://www.mira-mo.org>
  - Review pending legislation:
    - <https://www.govtrack.us>
    - <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/subjects/immigration/6206>
    - <https://immigrationforum.org/resources/?type=legislative-bulletin>
    - Read: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/opinion/children-detention-trump-executive-order.html>

# Listen to Your Catholic Leader

- Archbishop Robert J. Carlson:
  - issued a statement that said he understands the need to have secure borders, "but to forcibly separate children from their parents is inhumane, morally unacceptable and ineffective to the goal of deterrence and safety."

[http://stlouisreview.com/article/2018-06-21/  
when-bishops-speak](http://stlouisreview.com/article/2018-06-21/when-bishops-speak)

# Other Catholic Religious Statements

- Leadership Conference of Women Religious <https://lcwr.org> including:
  - Adorers of the Blood of Christ
  - Sisters of the Notre Dame
  - Incarnate Word Sisters
  - Sisters of the Most Precious Blood
  - Loretto Sisters
  - Sisters of St. Joseph, Carondelet
  - Sister of the Most Precious Blood
  - Franciscan Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Help

# Other Faith Groups

- Connect with Other Community Partners:
  - Jewish Community Relations: Council (Gavriela Geller, Senior Policy Associate) (<http://jcrctl.org>)  
(I am grateful for Gavi's guidance, support and for providing me some of the sites and points I have included in this presentation)
  - United Church of Christ (Rev. Traci Blackmon) (<http://www.ucc.org>)
  - Your own faith or community organization

# Attend a Rally

- St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America - Sara John, E.D., IFCLA
- <https://stl-ifcla.org>

# Get to Know Us! We are: St. Francis Community Services!

- A Catholic Charities Agency working with immigrants for over 30 years
  - Providing therapy, case management, youth programs and legal representation
- Look for updates:
  - <https://sfcsstl.org>
  - Facebook: St. Francis Community Services
- Donate! (funding for bilingual therapists and legal staff)
- Volunteer: Meredith Rataj