

In response to God's transforming grace
and the *signs of the times*
we dare to...

Advocate for Immigrants



Advent 2009

Dear Sisters and Associates,

In the midst of this hectic and commercialized pre-Christmas season, we invite you to advocate for our immigrant sisters and brothers who like Jesus, Mary, and Joseph find no room for them in the inn. At this time of economic upheaval, anti-immigrant sentiments abound. People of faith have a small window of opportunity to inform and transform hearts as we await the legislation expected in the spring of 2010.

Much has been written about the economic and political aspects of immigration reform. At its roots, immigration is a moral issue and our Catholic faith has much to contribute to the discussion. Bishop Anthony Taylor of Arkansas has written an **Advent Pastoral Letter** and provided a three-week Study Guide to facilitate reflection and informed discussion from a faith perspective. Both are provided on our website (<http://ssjphila.org/JusticeResources.html>) with the hope that local communities will use them during Advent. If possible, invite co-workers, parishioners, or neighbors to join you in exploring immigration through the lens of faith.

Brief **Scripture passages** with reflection questions that accompany this letter are for your personal use as well as for use in parish bulletins or in your place of ministry throughout the Advent – Christmas season. Hopefully these will stimulate reflection and conversation in the broader community.

Finally, let's celebrate **National Migration Week** which begins on January 3, 2010. The Justice For Immigrants website (www.justiceforimmigrants.org) provides posters and prayer cards to raise consciousness and promote concern for immigrants. This is so timely and so valuable, especially in parishes where there is not an immigrant presence.

Finding time to do any or all of these things calls for **courageous action**. Immigration Reform is an urgent need and a grace-filled opportunity. Millions of lives depend on it.

Gratefully,

The Immigration/ Human Trafficking Committee of the Commission for Justice