

## **Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia Statement on Immigration**

We, the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, compelled by the Gospel and by our heritage to be responsive to the "dear neighbor" without distinction, call on President Obama and the U.S. Congress to enact immigration policy that is both just and comprehensive.

We believe that this policy must include:

- a pathway to lawful permanent residence and citizenship,
- a process to reduce the backlog of family visas in order to ensure family unity and reunification,
- a guest worker program that ensures labor protections and equitable wages,
- a border security and enforcement policy that is humane,
- elimination of workplace raids
- humane treatment of immigrants who are detained
- a process whereby students who are children of undocumented families can earn a college degree and become gainfully employed. We must remember that these children are here through no fault of their own; and their only desire is to become a citizen of the nation in which they have grown up.

In our faith response to welcome the stranger among us, we urge Congress and the Administration to work for an immigration system that respects the dignity of every person. Our Catholic tradition emphasizes that all persons, regardless of their legal status, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. The basic human rights of persons who are undocumented need to be respected in all government policies.

Recently on April 4<sup>th</sup>, several of our sisters participated in the Immigration Listening Tour in Philadelphia, sponsored by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and led by Rep. Luis Gutierrez D-IL). The listening tour provided an opportunity to hear first hand testimonies from those who have been directly impacted by the present immigration system. We heard stories of parents and children, husbands and wives across American who are being torn apart by a system that values quotas over family values and which undermines our economic security in a time of crisis. Other sisters participated in the Good Friday rally at Penn Station, Newark NJ to raise awareness of the impact of immigration raids on Amtrak trains and Greyhound buses. They called upon the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to end the raids. Our sisters participated in this public action in support of our undocumented immigrant brothers and sisters.

The Gospel message is clear: we are called to share our resources and gifts with our brothers and sisters in need! As Sisters of St. Joseph, we take seriously our call to welcome the stranger as our brothers and sisters. As citizens, we urge our president and Congress to enact an immigration policy that is reflective of the fundamental values of justice and dignity.