



Proposed Corporate Stand on Migration

“Compassion moves us to reflect on the signs of the times, discern needs, and respond. We stand in solidarity with the poor and the powerless.”

Today the world is experiencing the largest movement of individuals and of peoples in human history. Estimates of the number of people on the move worldwide are as high as one billion, fifteen percent of the world’s population.¹ Both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have called migration a sign of the times to be interpreted in light of the gospel. Pope Francis explained that the phenomenon of migration is part of salvation history, “a sign of the times ... which speaks of the providential work of God in history and in the human community, with a view to universal communion.”² He noted that a majority of migrants were forced from their homes by “conflict, natural disasters, persecution, climate change, violence, extreme poverty and inhumane living conditions.”³

The Congregation has begun responding to this phenomenon in a variety of ways. These include the 2015 Family of Holy Cross Statement regarding the Syrian refugee crisis, the Leviticus 19:33 Initiative of the General Leadership Team (GLT) based on God’s command to love the stranger as ourselves, and sisters calling and writing to members of the United States Congress on behalf of migrants and refugees or providing direct service to them. The GLT began discussing the possibility of a corporate stand on refugees as the universal church continued to develop new ways to accompany migrants. The United Nations limits the definition of a refugee to “someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence,” but we are also concerned about those forced to flee due to economics, natural disaster, climate change, or threats from criminal elements.

As Sister Veronique (Wiedower) announced in her February 2nd letter, “The time has come for the Sisters of the Holy Cross to take a formal stand in solidarity with migrants forced to flee from their homes for any reason regardless of their race, creed, color, nationality or cultural background.”⁴ The Congregation Justice Committee is coordinating the corporate stand process which will culminate in a vote in 2019. During the year the CJC will offer materials and resources to help sisters learn more about migration, its root causes and effective ways to respond. These will be presented in the familiar format of the “pastoral cycle”: reflection on experience, social analysis, theological reflection, and informed action.

The first of these materials are the accompanying stories of the experiences of migrants—names have been changed to protect their identity—from each of the countries in which the Sisters of the Holy Cross minister. In his recent apostolic exhortation, *On The Call to Holiness in Today’s World*, Pope Francis writes that when Christians are faced with the situation of immigrants, “the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children.”⁵ We hope these migration stories will help you do just that.

In taking a corporate stand, the congregation reflects together on the signs of the times, raises its prophetic voice in a very public way and commits itself to action. The members of the Congregation Justice Committee thank you for your prayerful, thoughtful participation in the process as we keep in mind Sr. Veronique’s question, “How might our response to the reality of mass migration in our world speak of God’s providence and our desire to create community wherever we are?”⁶



¹ Idriss Jazairy, *The Protracted Refugee and Migrant Crisis: A Challenge to Multilateralism*, Inter Press Service News Agency, 12 December 2017.

² Pope Francis, “*Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless*,” 2017 Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

³ Pope Francis to the International Forum on “Migration and Peace,” 21 February 2017.

⁴ Letter of Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower) CSC, president to “Dear Sisters,” 2 February 2018.

⁵ Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate: On the Call to Holiness in Today’s World*, para 102.

⁶ Letter of Sister M. Veronique (Wiedower) CSC, president to “Dear Sisters,” 2 February 2018.