

## INTERFAITH STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

October 18, 2005

We, the undersigned faith-based leaders and organizations, join together to call upon President Bush and our elected officials in Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform legislation that establishes a safe and humane immigration system consistent with our values. Our diverse faith traditions teach us to welcome our brothers and sisters with love and compassion.

The Hebrew Bible tells us: "The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Leviticus 19:33-34)." In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger (cf. Matthew 25:35), for "what you do to the least of my brethren, you do unto me (Matthew 25:40)." The Qur'an tells us that we should "serve God...and do good to...orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer that you meet, [and those who have nothing] (4:36)."

We call for immigration reform because each day in our congregations, service programs, health-care facilities, and schools we witness the human consequences of an outmoded system. We see and hear the suffering of immigrant families who have lost loved ones to death in the desert or immigrants themselves who have experienced exploitation in the workplace or abuse at the hands of unscrupulous smugglers and others. In our view, changes to the U.S. legal immigration system would help put an end to this suffering, which offends the dignity of all human beings.

We call upon our elected officials to enact legislation that includes the following:

- An opportunity for hard-working immigrants who are already contributing to this country to come out of the shadows, regularize their status upon satisfaction of reasonable criteria and, over time, pursue an option to become lawful permanent residents and eventually United States citizens;
- Reforms in our family-based immigration system to significantly reduce waiting times for separated families who currently wait many years to be reunited;
- The creation of legal avenues for workers and their families who wish to migrate to the U.S. to enter our country and work in a safe, legal, and orderly manner with their rights fully protected; and
- Border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of identifying and preventing entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals, as well as pursuing the legitimate task of implementing American immigration policy.

While we support the right of the government to enforce the law and protect the national security interests of the United States, we recognize that our existing complex and unworkable immigration system has made it nearly impossible for many immigrants – who seek to support their families or reunite with loved ones – to achieve legal status. Reforming the immigration system to address this reality would allow the U.S. government to focus its enforcement efforts on real threats that face all Americans – citizens and immigrants alike.

We urge our elected officials to conduct the immigration reform debate in a civil and respectful manner, mindful not to blame immigrants for our social and economic ills or for the atrocities committed by the few who have carried out acts of terrorism. A polarized process that is lacking in civility would hinder deliberative discourse and not serve the best interests of our nation.

As faith-based leaders and organizations, we call attention to the moral dimensions of public policy and pursue policies that uphold the human dignity of each person, all of whom are made in the image of God. We engage the immigration issue with the goal of fashioning an immigration system that facilitates legal status and family unity in the interest of serving the God-given dignity and rights of every individual. It is our collective prayer that the legislative process will produce a just immigration system of which our nation of immigrants can be proud.

**National Organizations:**

Anti-Defamation League  
American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)  
American Jewish Committee  
American Jewish Congress  
American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA)  
B'nai B'rith International  
Catholic Health Association  
Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC)  
Catholic Relief Services  
Church World Service/Immigration and Refugee Program  
Columban Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men  
Episcopal Church USA  
Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus Leadership Council  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS)  
International Catholic Migration Commission  
Institute on Religion and Public Policy  
Irish Apostolate, USA  
Islamic Circle of North America  
Jesuit Conference  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation  
Jubilee Campaign USA  
Justice for Our Neighbors Immigration Clinic Network  
La Ermita - The Hermitage  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious  
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Mexican American Cultural Center  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate  
National Catholic Association of Diocesan Directors for Hispanic Ministry  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Jewish Communities  
United Methodist Committee on Relief  
United States Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart  
Women In Islam, Inc.  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
World Relief

**Local Organizations:**

Baltimore Jewish Council  
Building Bridges: Hispanic Outreach Project Community of St. Anthony Church in Canton, Ohio  
Cabrini Immigrant Services, Dobbs Ferry, New York  
Cabrini Immigrant Services, New York, New York  
California Province of the Society of Jesus  
Capuchin Province of St. Joseph, Detroit, Michigan  
Catholic Charities Diocese of Des Moines  
Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego  
Catholic Charities Hawaii

Catholic Charities Health and Human Services, Diocese of Cleveland  
Catholic Charities Housing Opportunities (CCHO), Youngstown, Ohio  
Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, New Mexico  
Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey  
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia  
Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc.  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, Texas  
Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington  
Catholic Migration Office of the Diocese of Brooklyn, New York  
Catholic Social Services in Anchorage, Alaska  
Clerics of St. Viator, Chicago Province  
Commonwealth Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Richmond, Virginia  
Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio  
Congregation of Holy Cross, Southern Province  
Congregation of Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Huntington, Indiana  
Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus  
En Camino, Migrant and Immigrant Services, Diocese of Toledo, Ohio  
Family Unity & Citizenship Program of the Diocese of Las Cruces  
HIAS and Council Migration Services of Philadelphia  
Hogar Hispano - Catholic Charities, Falls Church, Virginia  
Houston Dominican Sisters  
Human Concerns Commission of the Diocese of San Jose  
Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Ministries of Illinois  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action, Boston  
Jewish Federation of Greater Middlesex County, New Jersey  
Jewish Community Action, St. Paul, Minnesota  
Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona  
Lutheran Children and Family Service of Eastern Pennsylvania  
Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas  
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota  
Lutheran Social Services of Michigan  
Lutheran Social Services of New England  
Lutheran Social Services of Northern New England  
Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota  
Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area  
Marianist Province of the United States, St. Louis, Missouri  
Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty, New York  
Migration and Refugee Services Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey  
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Province of the Immaculate Conception, Paterson, New Jersey  
Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Stella Maris Province, New York, New York  
Missionhurst-CICM, Arlington, Virginia  
National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines, Iowa  
Northern Indiana Ecumenical Multicultural Ministry (NIEMM), Morocco, Indiana  
Organización for Latino Awareness of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago  
Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ), Hales Corners, Wisconsin  
Provincial Council of the Province of St. John the Baptist of the Order of Friars Minor, Cincinnati, Ohio  
River's Edge Community Church, Oella, Maryland  
Saints Peter and Paul Church, Savannah, Georgia  
Society of Jesus (Jesuits), New York Province  
Society of the Divine Word, Chicago Province  
St James Faithful Citizenship, Elizabethtown, Kentucky  
St James Parish Council, Elizabethtown, Kentucky  
St James Parish Social Ministries, Elizabethtown, Kentucky  
St. Benedict's Abbey, Benet Lake, Wisconsin

UJA-Federation of New York  
Vincentian Center for Church and Society at St. John's University, New York  
Washington Buddhist Peace Fellowship (WBPF)  
Western Dominican Province, Oakland, California  
Wider Church Ministries - United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio  
Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus

**Individual Faith Leaders:**

Pamela Beech, Archdiocese of Detroit, Lay Leadership and Formation  
Most Reverend Gerald R. Barnes, Bishop of San Bernardino  
Rev. Dr. Stephen P. Bouman, Bishop, Metropolitan New York Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Rev. Dr. Clive Calver, Walnut Hill Community Church, Bethel, CT  
P. Adam Carroll, 9/11 Relief Director Islamic Circle of North America USA (ICNA Relief)  
Patrick Gilger, SJ, Loyola University Chicago  
Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn  
John E. Dister, SJ, Detroit Province Jesuits, Loyola of the Lakes Retreat House  
Bob Dunden, SJ, St Benedict the Moor Parish, Omaha, NE  
John C. Fickes, Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus  
Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago  
Joseph K. Grieboski, President, Institute on Religion and Public Policy  
Michael Higgins, C.P., Provincial Superior of Holy Cross Province of the Passionists, Chicago, Illinois  
Daniel Idzikowski, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Inc., La Crosse, Wisconsin  
Fr. Michael J. Kavanaugh, Port Wentworth, Georgia  
Dr Khurshid Khan, President of the Islamic Circle of North America  
Most Reverend Gerald Kicanas, Bishop of Tucson  
Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church-USA  
Abbot Jerome Kodell, OSB, Subiaco, Arkansas  
Reverend John S. Korcsmar, CSC, Austin, Texas  
Sister Lorraine Lauter OSU, Owensboro, Kentucky  
Reverend Msgr. Ronald T. Marino, Brooklyn, New York  
Peter Vander Meulen, Office of Social Justice and Hunger Action, Christian Reformed Church  
Allan Parker, Pastor, Quitman Church of the Nazarene, Quitman, GA  
Sylvia Romero, Hispanic Ministry at Grace United Methodist Church, Olathe, Kansas  
Rev. Robert J. Scullin, Provincial, Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus  
Most Reverend Carlos Sevilla, S.J., Bishop of Yakima, Washington  
Secretary General, Rashid Siddiqui, Islamic Circle of North America  
Michael Simone, SJ, Weston Jesuit School of Theology  
Fr. Tom Smith, Hispanic Ministry of New Albany, Indiana  
Most Reverend Jaime Soto, Auxiliary Bishop of Orange, California  
Madonna Della Strada, Jesuit Residence  
Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski, Bishop of Orlando  
Professor Elie Wiesel, Boston University