



Countering the War at Home Get Involved!

In his 2008 pastoral letter on immigration, Arkansas Bishop Anthony Taylor writes, “One of the most distinguishing features of the Catholic Church is that we are called to be ‘universal’ in fact as well as in name. This means that there must be no dividing lines within our parishes, no second-class parishioners—all are welcome, without exception. In many instances, this will require a process of conversion within our own hearts as well as within our parish communities.” As Catholics, peacemakers and justice-seekers, members of parishes and local communities, what does this mean? How are we to stand in solidarity with both immigrants and with ministries within the Church being buffeted by the backlash against immigrants?

- 1.) Find out what is happening around immigration in the Catholic Church in your area. Reach out to the Hispanic or multicultural ministry office in your diocese, if one still exists. Contact your local Catholic Charities to find out if they are working to support immigrants. Explore volunteering in a detention center with a pastoral team. Organize a program or presentation in your parish.
- 2.) Create a list of state and regional immigration reform organizations, focusing on those led by immigrants or specifically accountable to immigrants. Which of these communities are working on issues that would provide the most common ground with your Pax Christi group? Think strategically about with whom to partner, making choices that will both help your group to build relationships in a multi-cultural coalition to resist the war at home and to deepen your anti-racism commitment.
- 3.) Write letters to the editor or call talk radio shows when hateful, racist language is used.
- 4.) Learn more about working in multicultural settings, as well as the issues impacting immigrants in your community. If you are white, how does white privilege impact your interactions with immigrant communities of color? Be honest about your intentions. Be prepared to describe your desire to move into accountable relationships with communities of color and why this is important to the work of resisting the war at home.
- 5.) Make a commitment to show up to support (with both time and money) immigrants’ rights. When it comes to working with white organizations, communities of color often want to know if the white folks will follow through or if they are just passing through. Part of white privilege and entitlement is having the option of taking up the anti-racism challenge of the war at home when it is in the white folks’ interest and then moving on to something else when it is not.
- 6.) Follow the lead of those most affected, i.e., immigrants. Be willing to learn from your mistakes.
- 7.) Sign up to PCUSA’s Rapid Response Network for the latest action alerts and information on immigration.

Our common faith in Jesus Christ moves us to search for ways that favor a spirit of solidarity. It is a faith that transcends borders and bids us to overcome all forms of discrimination and violence so that we may build relationships that are just and loving.
~ “Strangers No Longer, Together on the Journey of Hope,” A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration From the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, no. 19.

Contact Information:

Pax Christi USA
532 West Eighth Street
Erie, PA 16502
814-453-4955
info@paxchristiusa.org
www.paxchristiusa.org

SALES AND PUBLICATIONS
www.paxchristiusa.org

LOCAL GROUPS
Contact: Johnny Zokovitch
Phone: 352-219-8419
Email: johnnypcusa@yahoo.com

**PAX CHRISTI
USA**

The War at Home: Focus on Immigration

SPECIAL EDITION: JUNE 2009

PAX CHRISTI USA: NATIONAL CATHOLIC PEACE MOVEMENT



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PEACEMAKING quotes

“For your God is God of gods . . . who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

- Deuteronomy 10:17-19

“Come, you that are blessed, inherit the kin-dom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. . . .”

- Matthew 25:34-35

In 1999, Pax Christi USA launched “Brothers and Sisters All,” an initiative aimed at addressing the root causes of personal and systemic racism that perpetuate violence in our communities—including within our own organization—and result in deep spiritual and social brokenness. We seek to elevate and celebrate the rich, diverse membership of the Catholic Church.

Born out of the tragedy of international war, Pax Christi has always sought an end to war and violence, especially within the context of international relations, the arms race, and the threat of nuclear war. But the violence waged in places like Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, Colombia, and elsewhere also has its counterparts much closer to home—in our own families, streets, and communities. Over the past few years, and particularly as our own economy has collapsed, we have witnessed an increase in backlash against immigrants. This backlash, most prominently targeting the Latino community but also affecting numerous other communities of color within the United States, is a racist campaign, fueled by fear and hatred. It is an extension in our own communities of the “war on terror” that has caused so much death and destruction around the world.

The crackdown on immigrants has not only created a climate of fear and intimidation, but also prevents immigrants from exercising their economic and political power. Local and state governments are proposing and passing anti-immigrant legislation with

the explicit intent of driving immigrants (both legal and undocumented) out of their communities and further into the shadows and breaking apart families. This “low-intensity war” against immigrants is being waged in small towns and villages, factories and farms, day labor and construction sites across the country.

It is a war waged both against the principles of our faith and the Catholic Church, since so many immigrants share the Catholic faith and since our ancestors in faith, including Abraham and Sarah, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus, were migrants and refugees. As members of a national Catholic peace movement, we must engage in this struggle, providing support to and solidarity with our brothers and sisters. In this newsletter, we outline some of the major issues surrounding immigration and provide ways to stand in solidarity with brothers and sisters who are more recent immigrants.

This Special Edition of PCUSA’s membership newsletter focuses on the “war at home,” specifically waged against immigrant communities of color. Just as faith communities have spoken out against wars abroad, we as Pax Christi USA must raise our voices against wars on those who are vulnerable here: immigrants, especially the undocumented.

A New America

At the National Immigration Town Hall meeting in Washington, DC, on June 4, Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) reminded the audience that the first person to die in the current Iraq war was not a U.S. citizen but a young Latino immigrant. This little-known fact was part of the unfolding narrative that was the Reform Immigration for America national summit. The standing-room-only crowd represented the best of Emma Lazarus' Statue of Liberty poem for the United States of America. Immigrants and native-born persons of every race came together to call for comprehensive immigration reform legislation to provide workable solutions that uphold our nation's values and allow us to move forward together as one nation.

More than 700 local organizers from across the country came to Washington to map out a legislative strategy to pass comprehensive immigration reform this year. As we visited members of Congress, the campaign generated over 80,000 faxes and more than 20,000 e-mails and phone calls to congressional leaders. By the end of the day, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Speaker Nancy Pelosi were on camera stating their commitment to bring immigration reform legislation before Congress this year.

Working alongside these immigrant activists, I was deeply moved by their love of this country and their faith in the power of political action. As a long-time, white, middle-class peace activist, I often find it easy to become jaded by the political process and cynical about the possibility for change. But these mostly young people of color and their white allies believe that the U.S. political system can still work so long as they organize and mobilize their communities. They taught me a great lesson in hope and the power of community.

For details about the Reform Immigration for America campaign and to sign up for e-mail action alerts, go to www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org. If you prefer text message alerts, text "justice" to 69866 and follow the prompts.

Whether this campaign succeeds or not, it became clear to me that 700 committed activists

represent the emergence of a new consciousness in America. I believe that this multi-cultural coalition of mostly young local activists holds the key to any future peace and social justice movement in the United States of America worthy of the name. *Si Se Puede!* Yes we can!

Tom Cordaro is a member of the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team (PCART). The Reform Immigration for America Campaign Summit was held in Washington, DC, from June 3-5, 2009.

Militarization at the Border

Over the last two decades, the federal government has poured about \$10 billion into increased security (including wall construction) along the U.S.-Mexican border. A 2008 fact sheet from the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Customs and Border Protection stated that by the end of 2008, the number of border agents would be double that of January 2001. Between 1986 and 2008 the Border Patrol's budget increased over 5,600 percent and the number of agents quintupled.

Despite this increasing militarization, the number of undocumented immigrants entering the United States has continued to rise. Border militarization has forced immigrants to attempt more remote and dangerous crossings, leading to thousands of deaths from heat stroke, dehydration, hypothermia, and drowning. Blockades have also contributed to an increase in migrant smuggling, in which desperate migrants pay high fees to smugglers to get them into the United States. On both sides of the border, migrants have been abused and have died.

Catholic Social Teaching acknowledges each country's right to national security. Yet the approach that the United States has taken has led to thousands of deaths and countless human rights abuses. We must reject the fortress mentality and militarization of the border. Instead, a border strategy must prioritize the safety and security of border communities in both Mexico and the United States, including consulting with these communities. National security must include economic development and human and civil rights, not more walls, guns, and checkpoints.

The Role of the Church and Immigration

*Will we take a positive approach that helps newcomers to become full participants in society?
Or will we take a negative approach that creates a marginalized underclass
and a breeding ground for resentment?*

- Most Reverend Anthony B. Taylor, Bishop of Little Rock, "I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me. . . .": A Pastoral Letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants," November 2008, p. 6.

This atmosphere of welcoming is increasingly necessary in confronting today's diverse forms of distancing ourselves from others. This is profoundly evidenced in the problem of millions of refugees and exiles, in the phenomenon of racial intolerance as well as intolerance toward the person whose only "fault" is a search for work and better living conditions outside his [or her] own country, and in the fear of all who are different and thus seen as a threat.

- John Paul II, "Welcoming the Poor: Reigniting Hope," *Origins* 27:36 (February 26, 1998), p. 605.

The Church in our two countries is constantly challenged to see the face of Christ, crucified and risen, in the stranger. The whole Church is challenged to live the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-25), as they are converted to be witnesses of the Risen Lord after they welcome him as a stranger. . . . Part of the process of conversion of mind and heart deals with confronting attitudes of cultural superiority, indifference, and racism; accepting migrants not as foreboding aliens, terrorists, or economic threats, but rather as persons with dignity and rights, revealing the presence of Christ; and recognizing migrants as bearers of deep cultural values and rich faith traditions.

- USCCB, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," No. 40.

In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere.

As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various Dioceses actively to ensure that these people, who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood in the Christian community. Solidarity means taking responsibility for those in trouble. For Christians, the migrant is not merely an individual to be respected in accordance with the norms established by law, but a person whose presence challenges them and whose needs become an obligation for their responsibility. "What have you done to your brother or sister?" (cf. Gn 4:9). The answer should not be limited to what is imposed by law, but should be made in the manner of solidarity.

- Message of Pope John Paul II for World Migration Day, 1996.

The local Catholic parish is often a beacon amidst all the confusion that affects the lives of recent immigrants. Their voices confirm that the local church is, as it should be, a place of sacramental stability, spiritual uplifting and social community.

It should be a place of calm and security for all who worship there and for those who participate in the life of the parish.

- "Immigration: A Call to Be Patient, Hospitable and Active for Reform," A Statement from the Catholic Bishops of Nebraska, January 2009.

Pax Christi Groups across the U.S. Involved in Immigration Action

On August 1, a group of Bellingham Pax Christi folks will begin a two-week pilgrimage walk to the ICE Detention Center in Tacoma. They plan to average nine to ten miles per day and are requesting hospitality from Catholic churches along the way, although they welcome participation from all people of faith concerned about injustice to our nation's immigrant peoples. The pilgrimage will end August 15 with a prayer service at the ICE Detention Center. A blog giving the route and other information is at whatcom.blogs.com/pilgrimage.

Steve Clemens from Pax Christi Twin Cities (MN) recently did the sixth annual Migrant Trail Walk coordinated by Coalición de Derechos Humanos based in Tucson, AZ. For reflections, visit <http://mennonista.blogspot.com/2009/06/walking-migrant-trail-1.html>.

On Good Friday 75 members of Pax Christi New Jersey and the Interfaith Coalition for the Rights of Immigration Detainees and their Families gathered to pray and raise awareness about a little-known practice of the Department of Homeland Security. DHS has been conducting immigration raids on Amtrak trains and Greyhound buses within 100 miles of the U.S. border, using racial profiling to target immigrants. Even though the train or bus is not scheduled to cross a border, passengers are asked for proof of legal residency. As a result, people have been taken off and detained at county jails for suspicion of being in violation of immigration laws.

Pax Christi DuPage (IL) issued a press statement, "Stop the Campaign of Fear," in the wake of Rep. Peter Roskam's racist campaign this past fall directed against Latino immigrants. The statement read in part, "Unfortunately there are those who believe that they can improve their chances of winning elections by campaigning on fear, mistrust and hatred of those who are different. Rep. Peter Roskam's racist campaign directed against Latino immigrants—especially Mexicans—is symptomatic of this problem. . . The people of DuPage County . . . believe that diversity is a strength, not a deficit. We are a people who are deeply troubled by our broken immigration system, but we do not consider our undocumented immigrant neighbors to be criminals. And, as people of faith, we believe that regardless of one's legal status, we are all sons and daughters of God; and as such we are called to treat everyone with dignity and respect."

To read more about these and other local actions, visit the PCUSA Web site (from the homepage, go to "immigration" under "what's happening now") at www.paxchristiusa.org/news_Events_more.asp?id=1520.

Further Resources

www.invisiblechapel.com: *The Invisible Chapel* (DVD by John Carlos Frey, 2007) is a story of faith and perseverance pitted against fear and the heated immigration debate.

www.nalac.org: The National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities seeks to improve the quality of life for Latinos and Latino immigrants in their communities both in the United States and in countries of origin, to increase immigrant civic participation, and to advocate effectively for public policies that address the root causes of migration.

www.nnirr.org: The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights is composed of local coalitions and immigrant, refugee, community, religious, civil rights and labor organizations, and activists. It works to promote a just immigration and refugee policy in the United States and to defend and expand the rights of all immigrants and refugees, regardless of immigration status.

www.justiceforimmigrants.org: Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope, the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

www.usccb.org/mrs/stranger.shtml: "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," issued by the USCCB, January 22, 2003.

You shall treat the aliens who reside with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for them as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt.
~ Leviticus 19:34.

We . . . urge you to declare a moratorium on immigration raids in the State of Rhode Island, until our nation can implement a comprehensive and just reform of our immigration laws. It is our hope that such reform will make immigration raids obsolete. Until then, we believe that raids on the immigrant community are unjust, unnecessary, and counter-productive. . . . What we have witnessed is that the police action of ICE against immigrants has divided the community, instilled fear in our streets, disrupted the everyday life of good people and separated family members, innocent of any crime, from one another. The confusing and secretive detention of those arrested has further complicated the situation. As religious leaders concerned for our people we would be negligent of our pastoral duties if we didn't speak out against these unjust government policies and practices.
~ Most Reverend Thomas J. Tobin, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Providence and 15 pastors, "Letter to Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE)," Boston Regional Office, August 19, 2008.

Our current immigration policies, including things such as intermittent worksite raids, local law enforcement involvement, a wall along our southern border, among other enforcement actions, have led to a separation of immigrant families, an increase in fear and mistrust of law enforcement in immigrant communities and discord and violence along our southern border. . . . To continue to delay action [on immigration reform] will increase tension in states and localities, further alienate immigrant communities, and tacitly affirm the acceptance of a hidden and permanent underclass in our society.
~ Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles, January 2009.

Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity which should be respected. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.
~ USCCB, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," No. 38.

Yet racism itself persists in covert ways. Under the guise of other motives, it is manifest in the tendency to stereotype and marginalize whole segments of the population whose presence is perceived as a threat.
~ USCCB, "Brothers and Sisters to Us," No. 22.

We strongly urge that special attention be directed to the plight of undocumented workers and that every effort be made to remove the fear and prejudice of which they are victims.
~ USCCB, "Brothers and Sisters to Us," No. 50.

Human rights were inscribed by the Creator in the order of Creation . . . (they are not) concessions on the part of human institutions, (or) on the part of states and international organizations.
~ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, Vatican City, 1994, pp. 196-197.

The Catholic commitment to the dignity of the immigrant comes from exactly the same roots as our commitment to the dignity of the unborn child. Any Catholic who truly understands his or her faith knows that the right to life precedes and creates the foundation for every other human right. . . . [B]eing "prolife" also means that we need to make laws and social policies that will care for those people already born that no one else will defend. . . . We become what we do, for good or for evil. If we act and speak like bigots, that's what we become. If we act with justice, intelligence, common sense and mercy, then we become something quite different. We become the people and the nation God intended us to be.
Our country's immigration crisis is a test of our humanity. Whether we pass it is entirely up to us.
~ Most Reverend Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, June 2009.

CLINIC Echoes Call for Immigration Reform on Anniversary of Postville Raid

One year ago, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided a meat-packing factory in Postville, IA, and arrested more than 400 undocumented workers. The raid, recorded as the largest worksite action by ICE, left a community shattered as hundreds of families were separated and individual due process rights were abandoned. On the one-year anniversary, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) echoes the call of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for comprehensive immigration reform.

“Today’s anniversary is a solemn reminder of the need for practical and effective immigration policy, especially as it relates to enforcement. We recognize the need to protect our borders; however, there must be a balance. Our policies must recognize the dignity of the person, support family retention, as well as the rule of law. Raids do not address the challenges of our broken immigration system,” said CLINIC’s Chair Bishop Jaime Soto.

“Recent statements by Secretary Napolitano to review enforcement actions like Postville are encouraging, but there is need for further action,” added CLINIC Executive Director Mark Franken.

“CLINIC urges government officials to quickly take up the issue of immigration reform and put forward policies that are humane, just, and practical; policies that truly serve the common good.”

The ICE raid left lingering effects on the small community and surrounding area. In its wake, immigration advocates have rallied to prepare other communities for similar actions. These preventative steps were well-advised since DHS (Department of Homeland Security) continued to conduct raids. CLINIC, in support of its network of 186 charitable immigration programs, launched a Raids Response and Preparedness Project. The project provides training, support, and guidance to immigration legal services providers and community-based organizations.

“This project is important to help our programs be proactive; however, we are hopeful that in the near future, it will no longer be necessary,” said Tanisha Bowens, project coordinator. “Families should not be forcibly divided, children should not be traumatically separated, and communities should not be shattered.”

CLINIC (the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.) posted this press release on May 12, 2009. It is reprinted here with permission.

The mission of CLINIC is to enhance and expand delivery of legal services to indigent and low-income immigrants principally through diocesan immigration programs and to meet the immigration needs identified by the Catholic Church in the United States.

Visit CLINIC online at www.cliniclegal.org.

Most of us are the children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of immigrants. And so it has been a part of our country’s richness that people come here with many gifts from many different places. . . . It is important for us to recognize that immigration has made our country prosperous. I don’t speak of economic prosperity but of the cultural wealth that our diversity brings. . . . America is a country of immigrants. Our heritage and our Christian faith demand that we look for a just solution to the problems of our immigration system today.

~ Most Reverend Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, January 2009.

Reform is all the more pressing due to the outmoded state of our current immigration system. We should no longer condone a hidden underclass of human beings in our country and should bring them out of the shadows to fully contribute to society. Moreover, too few channels exist for low-skilled immigrants to enter the country and work or join family members in a safe and controlled manner. . . .

In our view, immigration reform should contain a broad-based legalization program which provides a path to citizenship; a future worker program with protections for both immigrant and domestic workers; family-based immigration reform that reduces backlogs without harming the current preference categories; restoration of due-process protections, including revision of the three- and ten-year bars and restoration of judicial discretion in deportation hearings; integration and implementation provisions; and measures that address the root causes of unlawful migration by encouraging economic development in sending countries. . . .

It is the view of the U.S. bishops that immigration reform needs to be enacted sooner rather than later.

~Statement of the Most Reverend John C. Wester, Bishop of Salt Lake City, and Chair, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration, at Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees, and Border Security, Hearing on Comprehensive Immigration Reform, April 30, 2009.

Expelling millions of people and closing the door to further immigration are not realistic options, historically, economically or socially. Our only real choice is whether to facilitate this process for the common good or to create as much misery as possible—and reap the undesirable consequences. There is, unfortunately, a complete disconnect between the economic and social realities that underlie immigration and current U.S. immigration law, which seeks to impede immigration from certain countries rather than facilitate the process.

~ Most Reverend Anthony B. Taylor, Bishop of Little Rock, “‘I Was a Stranger and You Welcomed Me. . . .’: A Pastoral Letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants.” November 2008, p. 6.

Rather than focus on those who are forced to break the law in order to provide for the basic needs of their families, we should focus instead on fixing the broken laws themselves: broken in the sense that they do not work and cannot work because they impede rather than facilitate the exercise of the God-given rights of migrants. . . .

The law is sacred only insofar as it is rooted in truth and justice, and only insofar as it is in the service of the common good.

~ Bishop Taylor, “‘I Was a Stranger,’” p. 11, 12.

The so-called “illegals” are so not because they wish to defy the law; but, because the law does not provide them with any channels to regularize their status in our country—which needs their labor: as I said, they are not breaking the law, the law is breaking them.

~ Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, Bishop of Orlando, March 2006.

The nation cannot have it both ways. . . . We cannot accept the toil and taxes of immigrants while relegating them to a permanent underclass subject to abuse and exploitation.

Immigration reform must be addressed sooner rather than later. . . . We need a just resolution to a public debate that is dangerously corrosive and will only worsen with inaction. To continue to delay action will increase tension in states and localities, further alienate immigrant communities, and tacitly affirm the acceptance of a hidden and permanent underclass in our society.

Immigrants must be brought out of the shadows so they can fully contribute to our nation’s future economic and social well-being.

~ Roger Cardinal Mahony, in “Now is the Time for Immigration Reform,” to the incoming administration, January 8, 2009.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Comprehensive immigration reform must:

1. **Uphold family unity as a priority of all immigration policies**, enabling families to reunify without years of waiting. For instance, SAALT reports that many South Asians currently being sponsored by U.S. citizen siblings have to wait nearly eleven years before obtaining green cards; others, green card holders in particular, continue to wait to be reunited with spouses and children. The National Council of La Raza and the Urban Institute report that two-thirds of children split up from their parents during immigration raids are U.S. citizens. Upholding family unity necessitates increasing the number of visas available to family members, dealing with the backlog of applications, and dealing with delays due to background and security checks.

2. **Create a process for undocumented immigrants to earn legal status and eventual citizenship.** This would stabilize the labor market, improve family unity, and improve the standard of living in immigrant communities

3. **Protect workers and their rights and provide efficient channels of entry for new migrant workers.**

4. **Restore due process protections.** For example, after 9/11, the detention and investigation of “special interest” detainees has led to prolonged detention without charge; interference with the right to counsel and closed immigration hearings; revocation of bond; and physical and verbal abuse while in confinement.

5. **Reform detention policies, including conditions at detention facilities and jails.**

6. **Align the enforcement of immigration laws with humanitarian values.**

In addition to revising U.S. immigration laws, policies, and practices, the United States must work to address the root causes of migration: economic inequality and a lack of development, especially in rural areas.

Economic inequality has been exacerbated by economic globalization policies supported by the U.S. government, such as NAFTA and CAFTA. Oscar Chacón, Amy Shannon, and Sarah Anderson report that “NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) almost certainly contributed to the sharp increase in the number of Mexicans living in the U.S. without authorization, from 2 million in 1990 to an estimated 6.2 million in 2005.” Because barriers to agricultural imports have been lifted and because of World Bank- and IMF-promoted cuts to support for small farmers, Mexican and Central American farmers have had to compete with cheap, heavily subsidized products from the United States, making it impossible to make a living from farming.

Additionally, migration is affected by natural disasters and land conditions, such as depleted soil. Many people have been forced onto marginal lands or housing; when a disaster strikes or crops fail, they are forced to move. Due to structural adjustment and other programs, developing countries have cut funding for social programs that support people.

Without efforts to address global economic inequalities, it will not be possible to address immigration, and any “solutions” will be only temporary. Even further, without addressing economic factors, it is impossible to address the economic scapegoating of immigrants and people who are poor. This reform must extend to ensuring living wages and benefits for all workers, in the United States, Mexico, and other countries.

Resources:

- www.interfaithimmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/interfaith-immigration-platform-2009.pdf
- “Alternatives to a Wall” by Oscar A. Chacón, Amy Shannon, and Sarah Anderson, printed in *Yes!* magazine, Summer 2006, available at www.yesmagazine.org/other/pop_print_article.asp?ID=1454

On Racial and Religious Profiling

Many communities of color experience profiling, a law enforcement tactic that connects individuals to crimes based on certain characteristics unrelated to criminal conduct.

Since 9/11, incidents of law enforcement and immigration officials racially profiling Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs, and South Asians have increased. This can happen by being singled out for extensive searches when boarding a plane or when South Asians experience FBI background check delays with their immigration applications.

South Asians have also faced profiling through immigration policies that have focused on nationals from certain countries. For example, certain male nationals from predominantly Muslim and Arab countries, including Bangladesh and Pakistan, were required to register with the Department of Justice through a program known as “special registration” in the wake of 9/11. As a result of this initiative, nearly 14,000 men were placed

in detention and deportation proceedings, primarily for minor immigration violations.

Even local and state law enforcement agencies have engaged in profiling practices that have impacted the South Asian community, such as when Georgia law enforcement, along with the Drug Enforcement Administration, in Operation Meth Merchant, targeted South Asian convenience storeowners accused of selling everyday ingredients that could be used to make the drug methamphetamine.

SAALT works to increase awareness within the community and the government about racial and religious profiling. Along with South Asian community-based organizations and Arab-American and Muslim-American ally organizations, SAALT has called upon members of Congress, law enforcement agencies, and prosecutors to end policies and practices that have the intent or impact of profiling.

This article from SAALT is reprinted with permission. South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national nonprofit dedicated to fostering an environment in which all South Asians in the United States can participate fully in civic and political life and have influence over policies that affect them. It is the only national staffed organization in the United States that advocates around issues affecting South Asian communities through the use of a social justice framework. Visit SAALT online at www.saalt.org.

Racism and the Sotomayor Nomination

Analysis by the Pax Christi USA Anti-Racism Team (PCART)

Often ignored in the “immigration debates” is the racism underlying this discussion. This racism targets not only immigrants, both documented and undocumented, but often people who are perceived or thought to be immigrants, regardless of where they were born, how long their ancestors have been in this country, or their immigration status. We see this dynamic with the nomination of a U.S.-born Latina to the U.S. Supreme Court. A PCART analysis of this nomination begins:

“With the nomination of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court, the cyberspace blogs and the airways have been filled with rhetoric from both supporters and opponents. Supporters see another small step toward racial justice in America. Opponents see the nomination as a threat to their values. We hear words like affirmative action. We hear cries about judicial activism. Underneath it all are currents of racism and white privilege.”

Read the full article online at www.paxchristiusa.org

Dear President Barack Obama:

We congratulate you on your election as the 44th President of the United States; we look forward to working with you and your Administration in the coming years to bring about the changes that are needed to improve the lives and safety of immigrant and refugee communities in this country.

We urge you, as our new President, to strengthen this country's commitment to human rights for all, and to seek justice for the hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers and families who have suffered from abuse, discrimination and violence.

We ask for your support and action during the first 100 days of your presidency, to end the immigration enforcement actions—raids, detentions and deportations—that are causing immeasurable hardships in immigrant communities. Most urgently, we ask for the immediate cessation of all immigration policing and raids where people live, work, worship, study and play.

We believe this action is a necessary pre-requisite to addressing the larger issues of immigration policy and the passage of significant legislative reforms.

We also call on you to:

- Work with Congress to immediately initiate a series of field hearings on immigration law enforcement and its impacts and effects on our communities in the interior and the border, with special attention to its effects on the economy, workplace and Constitutional rights. These hearings must include the voices and experiences of those directly affected by immigration policing and raids. During the last eight years, the Bush Administration's Department of Homeland Security vehemently attacked and undermined the rights of immigrants and refugees. Families, workers and communities experienced intense policing; hundreds of thousands were detained for immigration status alone and their due process rights blatantly violated and ignored, resulting in deportations. Their testimony is vital to the consideration of immigration reforms and to ensure that the DHS is held accountable for its policies, strategies and practices.
- Suspend detentions and deportations while hearings are held and humanitarian policy alternatives are put in place to reinstate due process and the rule of law to immigration services and enforcement.
- Support a legalization program that offers opportunities to regularize the status for all undocumented immigrants, without the onerous hurdles of past proposals that would have drastically limited the number of immigrants who could actually legalize. Those proposals would have subjected hundreds of thousands of immigrants and their children to a precarious existence without guarantee of permanent residency at the end of a lengthy conditional process.
- Uphold family reunification as a core principle of U.S. immigration policy. We need to expand legal immigration opportunities, expedite processing and resolve the backlog of current, eligible visa applications. We should do away with the harsh obstacles to immigrating, including the "3 and 10 year bars," unfair and burdensome political asylum procedures, and high income requirements for immigrant sponsors.
- Insist that due process rights be restored and preserved, to ensure equality before the law for all persons, regardless of their immigration or citizenship status. We need the protection and expansion of the civil and labor rights of all immigrants, as well as community-based oversight and accountability of the Department of Homeland Security for immigration law enforcement and services.

- Take action to end the criminalization of immigrants, including:
 - o the repeal of employer sanctions, which have led to problematic employment verification requirements and the criminalization of immigrant workers; an end to the electronic worker verification program and the sending of SSA no-match letters to employers.
 - o an end to criminal prosecutions for immigration-related conduct such as unlawful entry, driving without a license, or so-called "identity theft."
 - o an end to immigration enforcement collaboration with local, county and state police as well as other government agencies.
 - o the end and roll back of border militarization policies, practices, measures and laws, including the use of high technological surveillance.
 - o the end to indefinite and mandatory detention.
 - o an end to the inhumane conditions and treatment of detainees in detention facilities, immigration prisons and DHS-contracted facilities.
- Strengthen and ensure enforcement of labor law protections for all workers, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.
- Oppose guestworker programs in their various forms, whether they are tied to legalization for undocumented immigrants already living and working here, or as a means for "managing future flows" of immigrants into the United States, especially as components of international trade partnership agreements.
- Prioritize funding for immigration services to clear the backlog of pending applications for family reunification visas, green cards, citizenship and services for immigrant integration.
- Ensure access and support for all public services and benefits including education, health care, and drivers' licenses.
- Support the right of mobility and return for all displaced peoples, refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked persons and migrants. U.S. policies should be in full compliance with the UN Conventions and Protocols related to the status of refugees and the right to asylum, and we should give particular attention to the plight of displaced women and girls, and include gender-based violence as a basis for refugee status.
- Commit to addressing migration in our foreign policy and economic agreements. The U.S. must shift away from the current trend of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements that exacerbate the displacement of communities. It should also abandon its globally discredited foreign policy emphasis on military intervention and its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We urge you to ensure that U.S. trade, economic and other foreign policies are built upon principles of fair and just diplomatic engagement, and support sustainable development programs, job creation, and fair trade that build viable and healthy communities around the world.
- Include consideration of the UN Convention for the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the international standard of human rights protections for all migrants, as you strengthen U.S. recognition and adherence to human rights agreements.

Thank you for supporting the human rights, safety and well-being of immigrants and refugees.

Organized by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (www.nnirr.org) and signed by over 3500 individuals and organizations, this letter was circulated as a sign-on to Pax Christi USA members through the Rapid Response Network in December 2008 and January 2009.