

I was a ~~stranger~~ and you welcomed me.
Matt. 25:35
Jesus

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We, the Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, are deeply concerned about the U.S. administration's executive orders on immigration and refugee resettlement which serve only to threaten border communities, force our immigrant community members further into the shadows, and endanger those fleeing violence. These misguided executive orders do nothing to make anyone more secure and may well have the opposite effect.

We are troubled by President Trump's order which bans residents of seven Muslim majority countries from entering the U.S. for 90 days, suspends refugee resettlement entirely for four months, and bars resettlement of Syrian refugees indefinitely. This is unconscionable in the face of the unprecedented global refugee crisis. The Trump administration has forced all of us to turn our backs on families who are literally running for their lives.

This nation, and the greater Toledo area, has a long history of welcoming immigrants and sheltering refugees. The Sisters of St. Francis arrived in Toledo at a time of rapid growth for the Catholic immigrant population. Most of us trace our roots to immigrant families. We have served immigrant and refugee communities for a very long time. The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania, Ohio, remain committed to welcoming refugees who come to this country after passing through the U.S. government's already rigorous screening processes. Halting or undermining the U.S. refugee resettlement program leaves vulnerable refugees, including women and children fleeing violence, in extreme danger and diminishes us all.

We strongly object to President Trump's attempts to limit our ability to heed God's call to welcome the stranger (Mt. 25:35) and to care for those most in need (Mt 25:40). As a congregation of women religious and associates, we stand with the poor in the struggle for justice, incarnating hope, by seeking to improve the quality of human life. We are particularly concerned about regulations that deny access to refugees because of their religion, race, or nationality. It is a violation of our faith and every norm of humanity.

We vow to continue to welcome refugees and minister to immigrants. The Sisters of St. Francis of Sylvania and our associates will continue to press for restoration of refugee resettlement, relief for families, an end to needless deportations, and the closure of all family detention centers. We will continue to advocate for compassionate, bipartisan legislation that fixes our broken immigration system. We will continue to stand in solidarity with families, regardless of immigration status, who labor daily to provide safety and security for their children.

This statement is based on a statement issued by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.