



USFRANCISCANS

FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PO Box 61128 • NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02746 • 860.759.2427
exec@escofm.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 31, 2017

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matthew 25.35)

The recent actions of the new President regarding the treatment of immigrants and refugees entering our country have been troubling to a wide ranging group of citizens across the United States. As Franciscans, we are morally outraged by and resolutely denounce the January 27, 2017 Executive Order addressing the U.S. refugee admission program.

While the action's stated intention is to protect the U.S. from terrorism, it is ill conceived and counter to our country's founding principles. Furthermore, whether intended or not, it is perceived as targeting Muslims and as suggesting that all Islamic refugees are suspect. This is an affront to the human dignity of our refugee sisters and brothers fleeing persecution and war. We believe that the order as written and implemented sows division and animosity, making the solidarity that leads to security less possible.

We feel compelled to add our support to the many voices from various sectors of our society who also have decried this Executive Order: migrants themselves, business leaders, civic and political leaders, public personalities and, religious leaders including many U.S. Catholic Bishops.

Some of our ministries have been fortunate to welcome refugees into their communities, working with Church organizations contracted by the U.S. government after the lengthy (usually two to four years) vetting process already in place. Still other ministries have been places of welcome for immigrants, carrying out the Biblical mandate to "welcome the stranger."

Pope Francis, during his 2015 visit to the U.S., reminded Americans of the importance of our own identity as immigrants. He said, "As the son of an immigrant family, I am happy to be a guest in this country, which was largely built by such families." Our country, when at its best, has cherished and enfolded this Biblical decree to "welcome the stranger" by proudly embracing its identity as a nation of immigrants.

Considering this heritage and in solidarity with our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters, we Franciscans commit ourselves to:

- Advocate for the rescission of the January 27 Executive Order;
- Prepare to be communities that offer hospitality to our refugee brothers and sisters; and
- Continue to reach out to and/or deepen our commitment to solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters.

We pray that God's wisdom will prevail and will lead all of us to seek the Common Good.

FRANCISCAN FRIARS (O.F.M.) OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Very Rev. James Gannon, OFM
Assumption BVM Province
Franklin, WI

Very Rev. William Spencer, OFM
Sacred Heart Province
St. Louis, MO

Very Rev. Kevin Mullen, OFM
Holy Name Province
New York, NY

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Saint Barbara Province
Oakland, CA

Very Rev. Robert Campagna, OFM
Immaculate Conception Province
New York, NY

Very Rev. Jeff Scheeler, OFM
Saint John the Baptist Province
Cincinnati, OH

Very Rev. Jack Clark Robinson, OFM
Our Lady of Guadalupe Province
Albuquerque, NM