

**MARYKNOLL LEADERSHIP STATEMENT ON  
THE MIGRANT CARAVAN**

As the procession of desperate people from Central America walks its way north through Mexico bound for the United States, the leadership of the four organizations that share the Maryknoll name, the Maryknoll Sisters, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Lay Missioners, and Maryknoll Affiliates, call on the leaders of the United States to listen to the cries of an oppressed people and to respond with compassion and dignity worthy of our nation.

With each difficult step, the caravan's members are asking the people of the United States to prepare, to open our arms and hearts, and to listen to the stories they have to tell – stories of violence, hunger and persecution, of pain, fear and hope. As these vulnerable people approach, some with babies in their arms, many children themselves, we, as a community of Catholic men and women who have a long history in Central America and know their plight first hand, feel profoundly close to these sojourners and unequivocally reject President Donald Trump's characterization of the caravan as a "invasion of our country." The migrant caravan is a humanitarian crisis, not an invasion. The Trump administration is abandoning the United States' historic moral vision as a beacon of freedom and hope.

Instead, we say 'Welcome, brothers and sisters.' Refuge is a right. Asylum is the law. We recognize that this dense concentration of migrants does not represent a threat but a survival strategy to protect themselves from assault, exploitation, and theft on the dangerous journey to safety.

Saint Óscar Romero taught us, "When the church hears the cry of the oppressed it cannot but denounce the social structures that give rise to and perpetuate the misery from which the cry arises." Inspired by love, we call on the United States to act with compassion toward migrants and to work to transform our relationships with our southern neighbors to enable livable communities to flourish everywhere.

**Maryknoll Sisters   Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers   Maryknoll Lay Missioners   Maryknoll Affiliates**

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