



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS
Peace, Social Justice, and Integrity of Creation
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Contact: Thomas Gould
(202) 832-1780, thomas@maryknollogc.org

Maryknoll Missioners Respond to the End of Title 42

WASHINGTON, DC – Maryknoll missioners serving migrants on the U.S.-Mexico border are dismayed that, with the end of Title 42 today, the Biden administration has announced plans to replace it with even greater restrictions on asylum. The right to seek asylum is a moral value that the United States enshrined into law after lessons learned in World War II, when millions of people who were forced to flee persecution desperately needed protection. We oppose any restrictions that inhibit the right to seek asylum. The United States must instead work to build a safe, orderly, and humane asylum process that protects and welcomes asylum-seekers.

Maryknoll Lay Missioners stationed in El Paso, such as **Director of Mission Elvira Ramirez**, say the anxiety is palpable. “The stakes keep getting higher for migrants and asylum-seekers who already have risked everything to get to the Border.” **Maryknoll missionary Deirdre Griffin, SSJ**, says, “The lifting of Title 42 is long overdue. Rather than creating new forms of institutional violence that deny the suffering of our sisters and brothers (transit ban, heavy handed use of the expedited removal process, etc.), it is time to be honest about the humanitarian crises knocking on the doors of our southern border and to respond with the compassion of Christ.”

As **Lay Missioner Heidi Cerneka** notes, “the recent proposed asylum policy by the Administration seeks only to reduce the numbers at our border. It does not address people who have fled persecution in their countries of origin, nor does it consider our obligation to protect them.”

This is not a moral standard our country should accept. As Heidi Cerneka states, “As citizens of the United States, as global citizens, and as people of faith who defend human dignity and the sacredness of each person, we must ask critical questions and keep migrants, justice and life at the center of all we do.” **Sister Lelia (Lil) Mattingly, M.M.**, writes “it is possible to organize an orderly entry to the U.S. for asylum-seekers. It was done for the Ukrainians.” She explained, “many of the asylum-seekers have family or sponsors in the U.S.” The United States has the capacity to process all cases, as well as provide shelter to immigrants on their ways to their final destinations.

Father Raymond J. Finch, M.M., wrote, “Our moral integrity is rooted not in our ability to coerce but rather in how we treat the most vulnerable when we encounter them. I believe that as a country we can do better.”

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missioners, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missioners serve.

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Maryknoll Sisters • Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers • Maryknoll Lay Missioners

200 New York Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 832-1780 phone
ogc@maryknoll.org

P.O. Box 311
Maryknoll, N.Y. 10545
(914) 941-7575 phone
(914) 923-0733 fax