

# CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

## Eastern Province, USA

*Celebrating the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Foundation!*

Office of the Provincial



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### A STATEMENT BY THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THIS HOUR

*“Love and truth will meet; justice and peace will kiss. Truth will spring from the earth  
justice will look down from heaven (Psalms 85:11-12).”*

AS PRIESTS AND BROTHERS OF THE EASTERN PROVINCE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION IN THE UNITED STATES, we are committed to serving the “least of these” in our society (Matthew 25:40), and to inviting and preparing others to do so as a response to Jesus Christ, after the manner of his servant St. Vincent de Paul.

Allied with our sisters and brothers in the spiritual family of St. Vincent de Paul, we can no longer be silent as we witness abrupt and devastating policy changes that threaten the well-being of our communities, particularly the most vulnerable among us. Our Catholic faith, along with the values our country was founded on, call us to speak out in defense of human dignity and basic human rights and to be in solidarity with all people, especially those who suffer injustice, exclusion, and hardship. We call on Congress to recognize its responsibility to shape policies and enact budgets that reflect the moral values of justice, compassion, and respect for human rights and human dignity. We call upon the judicial branch of our government to uphold a system of law that treats all people in justice with equal rights and voice. We call upon our executive leadership to lead the people of this country with an awareness of how blessed we already are and how we are called to use our resources for the good of our world in dialogue with other leaders.

Of special concern to us is the plight of immigrants who have come to our shores seeking a better life. While we recognize rightful needs of security and compliance with laws, even up to and including deportation where warranted for public safety and as the result of just processes, the exaggerated responses of our government to perceived threats to our country are causing profound hardship among simple, law-abiding people who harvest our crops, labor in meat packing plants, build homes, work in service industries, research cures for diseases, pay taxes, and contribute to the wealth of our nation, often seeking shelter from the storms of their countries of origin. We respectfully suggest the following guidelines to allow for a just immigration policy:

1. Uphold Human Dignity: Implement humane and proportionate enforcement policies that respect the inherent dignity of every individual, regardless of their legal status or national origin, and prioritize family unity.

2. Create Clear Citizenship Pathways and Ensure Due Process: Establish clear and accessible pathways to legal status and citizenship for undocumented individuals who are integrated into U.S. communities, recognizing their contributions and promoting their well-being.
3. Protect Asylum Seekers: Ensure the right to asylum is never denied when lives are genuinely threatened and remove barriers to humanitarian protection, upholding U.S. and international legal obligations.
4. Address Root Causes Through Foreign Policy: Shift focus from solely border enforcement to comprehensive international strategies that address the root causes of migration, such as violence, poverty, and persecution, by evaluating and adjusting U.S. foreign policy. Our country has always been a beacon of hope and icon of justice in many nations.

Our bishops, in whose regions the members of our Congregation serve, have been steadfast in their statements requesting deep reforms in our immigration system, and budgetary alignment with moral principles. We urge the federal executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the United States Government to recognize their moral authority and responsibility in making decisions that impact the lives of countless individuals. Legislation, policies, and actions of government officials matter, as they serve to define our nation's character and determine whether we uphold the principles of decency, fairness, and humanity. Compassion also is a virtue to be enacted in policy and law.

Rooted in the Gospel and the teachings of our Catholic faith, we call upon government officials to reflect on this teaching of St. Vincent de Paul:

*"We should make a great effort to learn the following lesson, also taught by Christ: Learn from me because I am gentle and humble of heart. We should remember that he himself said that by gentleness we inherit the earth. If we act on this, we will win people over... that will not happen if we treat people harshly or sharply", (Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, 6).*

We pray each day that our leaders might be given the insight to carry out their duties in a manner that upholds the inherent dignity of every person, created in the image of God.

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