



HERMANAS DE LA CARIDAD  SISTERS OF CHARITY OF  
= VERBO ENCARNADO = INCARNATE WORD

February 2017

## Seeds | By: Katty Huanuco CCVI and Jennifer Reyes Lay |

As Lent begins, we are invited to look for the good that may be hidden, because there are many good things all around us if we have eyes to see and ears to hear.

Seeds, in this issue, gives us the opportunity to discover the good happening through each shared story. It also offers some resources that provide us with the opportunity to collaborate with others to nurture and put into action the love in our hearts.

Thank you to all the people who have written us to share life, their testimonies, and their stories. Their lives remind us that love and courage go hand in hand, and can transform the world.

## Human Trafficking

**HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN PUCALLPA.** "One of the problems in identifying trafficking is that many of the victims do not see themselves as such and may assimilate to their exploitative situation. Despite the harm they experience, they develop mechanisms to cope with the physical and psychological impacts. In some cases, they become dependent on their exploiters, identify with them, and even protect them, to the point of being afraid and not wanting to collaborate with the justice system." This information comes from the Report of Trafficking in Persons In the Amazon, carried out by Human Social Capital (CHS) in 2016.

These lines led me to rethink the methodology for the workshop: Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Educational Centers, aimed at Catholic teachers in Pucallpa, Peru. Thus, along with more than 70 teachers, we learned about the tactics of attracting women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation in order to share information and prevent students from becoming potential victims of this crime.

Pucallpa is the capital of the state of Ucayali, shares a border with Brazil, and constitutes an important tourist zone of the Peruvian jungle because of its 'hotel services, dance clubs and night clubs.' During the training workshop, several

teachers, even though they knew about cases of local trafficking, had difficulty identifying their city as a place of exploitation. It seems that this crime has become normalized.

This is not only the case for them, or the population in general, unfortunately it also happens with some authorities. According to the CHS Report "the main problem for this crime is that there are no trained professionals. Police and prosecutors often make mistakes in the processes - from incorrectly writing up the offense to following the wrong procedure, which causes a near absence of fiscal oversight."

However, it gives me a lot of hope that the workshop participants were so active and engaged, trying to learn as much as they could. At the end of the workshop we reflected on various biblical texts that highlight their commitment to prevent more young students from becoming victims of human trafficking.

It is worth mentioning that this event was possible thanks to the support of the Red Kawsay (Consecrated Life for a society without human trafficking) of which we actively participate as a Religious Congregation, and under the coordination of the Diocesan Office of Catholic Education in Pucallpa.

**CCVI SISTERS AND MINISTRIES PARTICIPATE IN LOBBY DAY AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING.** In 2016 the MO State Legislature voted to officially make January a month of Human Trafficking Awareness and Action to correspond with the national month against trafficking. January 25, 2017 marked the second annual Sex Trafficking Awareness Day at the state capital in Jefferson City, MO.

Present at the event, sharing educational and prayer resources, were members of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word and their ministry in Jefferson City, El Puente. Those present included Jennifer Reyes Lay, Assistant Director of the Congregational JPIC Office, Sr. Laura Magowen CCVI, Miriam Bannon (prenovice), and Sr. Barbara Neist SSND, collaborator with El Puente.

About a dozen organizations from across Missouri were present sharing information about the services they provide to victims of trafficking. There was also a brief legislative review session where we learned about pending bills in the MO Senate related to sex trafficking. Those bills include:

- Senate Bill #68 which would require posting an informative poster about human trafficking including the phone number for the national human trafficking hotline in all high risk areas such as transportation hubs, motels, and medical facilities.
- Senate Bill #289 which would protect tenant's rights who break a lease if they are a victims of sexual assault or trafficking and are in fear that their abuser or trafficker has found out where they live.

- Senate Bill #341 which would increase the penalty for those caught trafficking minors from a class A misdemeanor to a class E or D felony depending on the age of the child.

We encourage all those who live in Missouri to contact your state senators and representatives to support these bills.

Senator Jamilah Nasheed is the sponsor and/or co-sponsor of all of the above bills, and was the organizer for the Sex Trafficking Awareness Day. She has made this a key issue of focus during her time in the MO State Senate and we are grateful for her leadership and hard work to protect victims of sex trafficking and to help prevent it from happening in the future.

The day concluded with a press conference with Sen. Nasheed as well as two survivors of sex trafficking sharing their stories. It was a powerful day of advocacy for sex trafficking victims, and we were left energized by the news of a new human trafficking task force, headed by the MO Attorney General, to more systemically and strategically combat human trafficking in Missouri.

## **Living Laudato Si**

**CHIMBOTE DE PIE.** *Selene Mitchell, our Incarnate Word Missionary in Peru, live Laudato Si by supporting the efforts of the local coalition 'Chimbote de Pie'. This is a group of wonderful and brave people, who our JPIC Office met during our first community conversation of Laudato Si in Chimbote, Peru.*

*We rejoice in their achievements and we continue our commitment in their struggles and their dreams, because they are also ours. Learn about 'Chimbote de Pie' living Laudato Si, through Selene Mitchell.*

I connected with Chimbote de Pie by chance at the book fair in Nuevo Chimbote back in November 2016. Chimbote de Pie, according to their Facebook page, “is a citizen collective made up of institutions, professional colleges, youth groups and citizens in general. United together for the purpose of informing, sensitizing, raising public awareness and requiring relevant authorities to comply with laws to stop pollution in our bay.” Since its conception in 2014, the collective has held a number of workshops, information fairs, and bay cleanings. The group is led by Beverly Enriquez, an energetic and environmentally conscientious individual. She explains the initial reason for starting Chimbote de Pie, “It was to feed the pelicans that in certain seasons suffer and die for a lack of food source. We were young animalists without knowledge of the real problem, but these pelicans brought us closer to the coast, where we could see all this violence against the bay and its biodiversity. We decided to help to make this stop ... and instead comply with laws and projects to stop pollution.” Although initial efforts were to save the pelicans, overtime the group

realized that tackling the root of the issue, reducing pollution in the bay, would result in improving aquatic life as well as the pelicans.

I believe that we are all interconnected and need to not only sustain the other but provide support such that the other thrives. In this case, we as humans rely upon the land we live on and to blindly destroy the environment by pumping pollutants and chemicals into it weakens the land's ability to produce adequately. If we throw non-degradable plastic bags, pump sewage, and toxic chemicals from factories into our oceans we kill all of the aquatic life, which provides food and in-turn jobs. Additionally these actions make our oceans unsafe to enjoy. By understanding that we are in relation to the land and not apart from it, we can then understand that we must change our ways. That is what being a part of Chimbote de Pie means to me. I have met wonderful and friendly environmental activists who realize that Chimbote's bay is in a desperate state. Being a part of this group makes me feel empowered, confident, and informed. I am getting the chance to learn more about Chimbote's bay and overall environmental issues. I have had the chance to meet Social Justice activists, and also own my voice on this issue.

Mid February various community groups held a march to fight against corruption and environmental contamination. That was my first time marching for justice and I felt inspired and alive. Seeing hundreds of people marching for justice both surprised and humbled me. Change often does not come easily but with resistance and time. But with consistency, unity, and perseverance Chimbote de Pie will get the wheels of government bureaucracy moving. Perhaps there has not been a shift in the thinking of many but if more people work to elevate their thinking and create new habits, little by little we will all see a better tomorrow. Yet, this is a gentle approach to moving forward. Humanity has reached a pinnacle of urgency that only massive unity and organization will be the way to create an effective and far reaching movement. I think in grassroots movements we could all acknowledge the difficulties and setbacks. However doing so does little to encourage those fighting to make a difference. Therefore, I prefer to celebrate the good that has been accomplished and that will continue to occur. I am honored to be a part of Chimbote de Pie and look forward to spreading the message "Detener la contaminación en la bahia." (Stop polluting the bay).

*We thank Selene for her commitment to caring for creation. And as Anne Mora says, 'in the face of the uneasiness and concern for the earth, seeing the citizens massively unite and organize - in order to create viable solutions - gives hope. Because immediate changes could be implemented with equal representation of citizen, political, industrial and judicial power.' Thank you for living Laudato Si!*

## **Sister Story: Sr. Maria del Carmen Monroy**

*Carmelita, as we call her, is a very significant woman for many Peruvian Sisters and the people of Peru. Her testimony - in these lines - delves into spirituality and her commitment to non-violence: a way of dealing with systemic violence, inequalities and injustices. Sister María del Carmen Monroy CCVI, born in Mexico, came to Peru almost 27 years ago to teach us – through her lived witness - that only through inclusion can we build real communities that seek to build the Kingdom of God here and now.*

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Since the beginnings of my religious life in 1974 I have been formed in a corporate spirit where I was encouraged to share my thoughts or life experiences, but I also received many gifts from contact with my older Sisters who from their illness or old age encouraged me to look beyond what my eyes could see. There were difficult times, but at the same time they challenged us, they opened new paths for us to explore, gradually recovering the life that for a time had fallen asleep.

I can say with sincerity and gratitude that I have been very fortunate since my life resembles in some way that of Abraham, who was invited to leave what he knew and go in search of the fulfillment of the promises of God to make him father of a great people. I also left my land and have continued to follow my path to the present day, seeking day after day the signs of God's creative presence.

When I became aware of diversity I was able to experience a lot of joy. Knowing different things encouraged me to look for creative ways of encounter. I was confirmed in my belief that the Holy Trinity did well to make its home among us, in order to express to the world and to the Church that love, reconciliation, and a tender embrace is possible as a tangible presence of God.

During these 40 years as a Sister of Charity of the Incarnate Word, I have heard the continuous call to live unity in diversity, to create bridges of communion and participation. This has inspired me on my spiritual path to contemplate four icons: the Ark of the Covenant, the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word and Pentecost. Each one has been very important since they continue to motivate me to seek fruitfulness in community life and witness.

Having had the opportunity to live in different communities both nationally and internationally has become a great joy in my life since it has broadened my horizons and opened me up to multiculturalism which I have embraced with all its challenges. It also has been an opportunity to be protagonist of history, not only congregational but also the Church, in the world and as part of this cosmos.

It has been in the community setting that my sense of belonging and missionary spirit has been revitalized, continually listening to the words of the Gospel of Luke and making them mine: "He sent me to bring the Good News to the

poor, to announce release of the captives and sight to the blind, to bring freedom to the oppressed, and to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4: 18-19)

I find such strength in realizing that the Word gives sense to our daily living as people and as a community! It is this God of Life who sustains us in a timeless embrace! Because as I look back I realize that the Word has been with us since the beginning of the Congregation: when in 1866 Bishop Claudio Maria Dubuis asked for help and the first Sisters came to Galvenston; when the Madeleine Sisters, Pierre and Agnes took the rugged road to San Antonio, Texas in 1869; and when our Sisters left San Antonio in 1885 to bring the Word, and find it, in the people of Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Ireland and Zambia.

And as in the beginning, today and always: God speaks the Word; God speaks our life in the always present now. Every day I receive invitations to say yes, to share Christ with everyone. I can share this positivity even through silence: smiling at strangers where I find them, happily accepting people or unexpected events, respecting and appreciating what is different, listening with my heart and my ears, letting go of negative feelings, being open to new ideas, trying something different, and replacing anxiety with confidence in the Incarnate Word that knows and loves everything.

## Human Rights

**SOCIAL JUSTICE: A RIGHT.** What common characteristic identifies the Latin American countries? It is undoubtedly inequality. Inequality in the economic, social, and cultural spheres, results in a loss of human dignity and fundamental human rights inhabitants. And has an even greater impact on indigenous minorities.

Inequality is not unique to Latin America but also exists in many other countries, particularly in the so-called "Third World". And in recent times, millions of people in developed countries as well also suffer from discrimination and all kinds of abuse because of their status as migrants, refugees or undocumented persons. The world suffers from social injustice. For this reason, for the past 10 years we have commemorated the World Day of Social Justice on February 20th, established by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Equal opportunity and the observance of human rights are fundamental elements of social justice. And its basis lies in the equity that is essential for individuals to develop their full potential and to establish lasting peace. There is no peace without social justice.

Talking about social justice means "a respect for the human person, equality, the differences between people, and above all, human solidarity. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority," says the Catholic Catechism (no. 1928 and 1929 to 1948).

At present we live in a world characterized by the unfair distribution of wealth, which is in the hands of a minority, generating a scandalous exclusion. It is urgent to share in our communal spaces and work, testimonies consistent with our faith which help eradicate poverty and inequality. We must work in a variety of ways against the corruption that generates increasing marginalization and greater poverty.

States should establish public policies related to decent employment, quality education, housing and, given the current context of the scourge of corruption we are experiencing, punishment of those responsible for corruption, which include political and business leaders from different Latin American countries. A peaceful and prosperous coexistence must necessarily meet these demands, which various social groups are calling for.

"Justice is that in which the heart rejoices: when there is enough for everyone, when one sees that there is equality, equity, when each has their own. When one sees that there is enough for all they feel a great happiness in their heart," Pope Francis told us in his visit to Ecuador. Amen

*Victor Mendoza Barrantes (Director of the Social Justice Commission of the Diocese of Chimbote, Peru, and member of the CCVI International JPIC Committee).*

### **WOMEN RELIGIOUS INCLUDING CCVI PARTICIPATE IN WOMEN'S MARCH.**

"Women around the country and across the world took to the streets on January 21 in an unprecedented demonstration on behalf of human rights and equality. The Women's March in Washington was accompanied by more than 600 "sister marches" in 81 countries, on all seven continents and broke records with reports of nearly five million people participating worldwide.

In Washington, women religious gathered at the Stuart Center on the eve of the march to pray, share supper, and participate in a refresher course in nonviolence. The group was joined by still more marchers the next morning for mass at St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill. From there they headed out to join the throngs of women, men, and their children making their way to the Mall to join the singing, chanting, and marches that broke out in all directions.

The marchers represented a wide range of political causes often clearly identified by the signs they carried and the chants that left some hoarse. However, what was also clear to many was the intersectionality of the various causes and the shared commitment of many marchers to justice for women, families, immigrants, and refugees; support for human rights, healthcare, and environmental protections; and a commitment to nonviolence." *(from LCWR March 2017 Newsletter)*

Women Religious from the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word were among those who participated in local marches in Austin, TX and St. Louis, MO. The march in St. Louis drew around 20,000 participants, one of the largest marches and

demonstrations in recent history for them, and the march in Austin drew over 30,000 participants.

Sr. Jean Durel and Sr. Martha Ann Kirk were among sisters who attended the Women's March in Austin, TX. Sr. Jean Durel shared that, "It was an incredible experience to be with 30,000 people – multi-generational and multi-ethnic -- in a peaceful march to say that “women’s rights are human rights and that we stand together, recognizing that defending the most marginalized among us is defending all of us.”

Sr. Martha Ann Kirk also shared about her experience. "I was touched by a woman on oxygen in a wheel chair at the march in Austin whose poster said, “Hear our voice. Women’s rights are human rights. Black lives matter. No human is illegal. Science is real. Love is love.” As I walked next to her seeing the oxygen keeping her alive, I was also seeing so many people carrying signs “Repealing the Affordable care act is a death sentence for many. It seemed like a march to create a world of human dignity where all are respected, protected, and encouraged. Fathers, husbands, and male friends also participated and carried signs expressing their respect for women and hopes for their daughters.”

Jennifer Reyes Lay, from the JPIC Office, and Sr. Mary Kay McKenzie CCVI attended the Women's March in St. Louis, MO. For Jennifer the March was "an experience of the Holy Spirit, drawing us together across many different identities and experiences to stand together in solidarity with all women, to lift our voices and pray with our feet for the kind of beloved community, rooted in justice, that our Scriptures speak about. It was an incredibly energizing and hope-filled experience."

While the Women's March set impressive records and drew public and media attention, Sr. Jean reminds us that "one march is not enough. The call to each of us, whether we went to a march or not, is to take action in our local area. The new campaign is: 10 actions in 100 days. 1st Action: send a postcard to your senators about what matters most to you. For starters, are you upset about the planned wall on the U.S.-Mexico border? Or about the threats to cities declaring themselves as Sanctuary? Let your Senators know. More information can be found online."

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2017 – MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>.** This year's theme for International Women's Day 2017 is **#BeBoldForChange**. Call on the masses or call on yourself to help forge a better working world - a more gender inclusive world. Submit your **#BeBoldForChange** action via the IWD website.

**What if the world truly stepped up to take bold action?**

Will you **#BeBoldForChange** on International Women's Day 2017 and beyond by taking groundbreaking action that truly drives the greatest change for women. Each one of us can be a leader within our own spheres of influence by taking bold pragmatic action to accelerate gender parity. Through purposeful collaboration, we



can help women advance and unleash the limitless potential offered to economies the world over.

We have urgent work to do. Are you ready to #BeBoldForChange this IWD 2017 and beyond?

Use International Women's Day (IWD) on March 8 as an important opportunity to: celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women because visibility and awareness help drive positive change for women declare bold actions you'll take as an individual or organization to help progress the gender agenda because purposeful action can accelerate gender parity across the world.

### **#BeBoldForChange by Joining the National Women's Strike on March 8th**

Another way to participate in International Women's Day, is to join with hundreds of thousands of women around the world in an international women's strike on March 8th. The call for a women's strike in the U.S. is being led by organizers of the Women's March on Washington. The organizers are calling it "A Day Without Women," to draw attention to the important role that women play in all aspects of society. Suggested actions include withdrawing from corporations that are harmful to women and finding ways to support the businesses, organizations, and communities that sustain women.

In preparation for A Day Without Women, organizers encourage you to reflect on the following questions:

- Do businesses support our communities, or do they drain our communities?
- Do they strive for gender equity or do they support the policies and leaders that perpetuate oppression?
- Do they align with a sustainable environment or do they profit off destruction and steal the futures of our children?

We unite with the International Women's Strike on March 8th and we observe Strike4Democracy's Day of Planning on Friday, February 17th as we gather our friends, families, neighbors and coworkers and make plans to stand up for economic justice, affirmatively building community, and supporting local, women- and minority-owned businesses. In the weeks leading up to March 8th, we will continue to discuss the variety of ways that all people can join the fight for economic justice.

## **Peace**

**COMPASSION UNITES US ACROSS FAITH** By Sr. Martha Ann Kirk, CCVI

In the early hours of the morning on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017, a fire destroyed the Islamic Center Mosque, a place of prayer for about 140 people in Victoria, Texas. Investigators reported Wednesday that the fire was arson. A diversity of people had been expressing concern and many gathered for prayer the next morning. Sr.

Elizabeth Riebschlaeger, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, participated in that "Service of Unity and Peace" at the site.

She observed, "Hundreds of people — Christians, Jews, Universalists, atheists and agnostics — came together to stand together in prayer, on the basis of our common humanitarian values and the U.S. Constitution. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance together: as 'one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.' Never before have these words had such depth of meaning."

During the service Sr. Elizabeth filmed M.J. Khan, the president of the Islamic Society of Greater Houston, who spoke of the good that had happened in only one day since the fire. He said that while we have thought of this as a mosque for the Muslims, now we can see that it belongs to all the people of Victoria. He added, "All the places of worship belong to all of us." People of faith and people of no faith are welcome to "come here, find solace in your heart so that your heart is more peaceful." As if to underscore his words, the rabbi of the Jewish congregation in Victoria invited the Muslim community to pray in their synagogue.

Dr. Shahid Hashmi, the Islamic Center's president, asked that the event not be politicized, but that the community focus on the idea that "God is love, and those who live in love, live in God." Peter Bella, a friend of Sr. Elizabeth, wrote that over 13,000 people have already given small and large donations to help rebuild the mosque. He said, "This is the America I call home, in which we come to the aid of our brothers and sisters in time of need."

My congregation, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, has been blessed to have fine professionals of many faiths including Islam, working in our hospitals. As a university teacher on a research sabbatical at Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem over twenty years ago, I was inspired by the goodness of Muslims, Jews, and various groups of Christians around me. This led to travel for research and more interfaith dialogue. Turkish Muslims in the Hizmet (Service) movement work very hard to promote understanding and dialogue. We have become partners working together frequently.

Muslim families in Victoria especially like the Catholic schools because in these their children are learning the ethical principles common in the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Prompted by Sr. Elizabeth's connections in the Victoria area, a few years ago I was invited to lead a Muslim-Catholic Dialogue for the Victoria Diocese Religious Education Conference. I was assisted by people of this mosque in the dialogue. We used the film "In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: a Model for Peacemaking." The study guide for that film (created by Franciscan Sr. Kathleen Warren) has helpful educational materials to build understanding and overcome prejudice.

Sister Alice Holden, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, had considered entering our community's retirement facility on

her 80th birthday, but instead felt a call to develop the area where she has lived, on the property of the University of the Incarnate Word, as a center for interfaith activities called "Interfaith, INC." For eight years she had had a ministry of spirituality programs in the lovely wooded area, but she felt a deeper call that her spirituality ministry should be centered in drawing together people of many faiths. Our university has students and faculty of many faiths from over sixty countries, so her call could support the diversity of the university. Sr. Alice reveals that as we go deeper in our own religious tradition, we are closer to the Holy One and transformed by love. A poet herself, she often quotes the Muslim poet Rumi who writes of the love of God uniting us beyond our divided religious paths.

In his message for the 50th World Day of Peace, "Nonviolence: a Style of Politics for Peace," Pope Francis said that violence will not quell violence. He suggested we follow the example of Muslim Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, perhaps because we need to appreciate the good work of Muslims more. Francis also noted that "Women in particular are often leaders of nonviolence, as for example, was Leymah Gbowee and the thousands of Liberian women." Gbowee gathered Muslim and Christian women to organize "nonviolent protest that resulted in high-level peace talks to end the second civil war in Liberia." The pope's example of Leymah Gbowee invites us to set up conversations between Muslim and Christian women on how we can nurture nonviolence and peace. We will have one of those soon here at the University of the Incarnate Word, where we have many Muslim students, including about 200 from Saudi Arabia. There is so much anxiety among students and faculty here.

I first got to know of the Muslim community in Victoria when our mother was critically ill in Citizens Medical Center where my brother works. It is a fine hospital, with a room for prayer. As I went there to pray, I often saw a Muslim physician praying there also, since observant Muslims pray at regular times five times a day. Prayer brings healing. Praying together can help bring healing. We hope that we do not need fires to bring us together for prayer, but if they do, the Compassionate Holy One will cry with us and help us.

I have been influenced by Jesuit spirituality and the idea of "finding God in all things." The Quran says that everywhere we look we can see the face of God. I have grown through Muslim friends who have shared their spirituality and we have found common ground trying to be people of more compassion, justice, and service. In the challenges that we face now, may each of us compassionately try to listen to others, build bridges between communities, and open our eyes to recognize the face of God. So much compassion and unity is growing from the ashes of the mosque.

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# Immigration

**TAKE ACTION TO STOP THE RAIDS AND KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER.** Tell the White House and Congress that you **OPPOSE** President Trump's raids that are tearing families and communities. Despite continued outcry from faith communities and immigrants' rights groups, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has restarted workplace and home invasion raids. They are carrying out President Trump's recent executive orders to build a wall across the U.S. southern border, detain families and children seeking asylum, and force local police to serve as federal immigration agents. The administration is implementing these orders by targeting all undocumented immigrants, including a Methodist lay leader in Kansas, a DREAMer in Seattle and a mother in Arizona. Hundreds of individuals have been detained and are being processed for deportation.

Raids are an inhumane and unjust response to our broken immigration system, and as people of faith we must stand in solidarity with our undocumented brothers and sisters.

President Trump's raids on immigrant families and communities will not make anyone any safer. Walling off America, reducing community safety, and failing to protect those in need are affronts to our country's values of family unity, fairness, and equality. Faith communities have demonstrated unwavering commitment to our immigrant neighbors, including more than 800 congregations that have pledged support for the Sanctuary Movement and 1,000 faith leaders who have opposed policies that foster trust between immigrants and police. We draw from the scriptural call to love thy neighbor and welcome the sojourner by standing with our brothers and sisters to stop harmful deportations that tear families apart.

## **Call the White House and Congress TODAY**

President Trump: (866) 961-4293

Your Senators and Representatives: (202) 224-3121\*

\*Please call this line 3 times to be connected with your 1 Representative and 2 Senators.

*Sample Script: "I'm a Catholic Sister and your constituent from [City, State]. I urge President Trump to immediately STOP the inhumane and unjust ICE raids deporting our immigrant neighbors. Raids don't make our communities safer. I am also OPPOSED to President Trump's executive orders to build a wall, prevent asylum seekers from seeking safety, and force local police to serve as federal immigration agents.*

These executive orders are unjust, run counter to who we are as a nation, and do not reflect the welcome for immigrants I see every day in my own community. I urge you to do everything in your power to see these orders are reversed, and to stand in solidarity with our immigrant neighbors."

If you'd like to learn more about how you can offer support of various types, including sanctuary, please visit [www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org](http://www.sanctuarynotdeportation.org)

**SUPPORT THE BRIDGE ACT TO PROTECT UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS.** The BRIDGE (Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy) Act, S.128/H.R. 496, was recently introduced in Congress as a bipartisan effort to sustain the temporary relief from deportation and employment eligibility offered to youth through the Department of Homeland Security's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Under the BRIDGE Act, young people who came to the United States as children would maintain their eligibility to work and live in the U.S. without the fear of deportation and family separation so long as they meet certain requirements, such as showing a commitment to education or honorable service in our military and having no history of serious crime.

There are more than 750,000 young people who have received and benefitted from DACA. These youth entered the U.S. as children and know America as their only home. They are contributors to our economy, veterans of our military, academic standouts in our universities, and leaders in our parishes and communities. As Catholics, we have long supported DACA youth and their families as we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, especially that of our children.

Ask your Senators and Representative to support and co-sponsor the BRIDGE ACT by sending the following message:

Dear Senator/Representative,

As a Catholic I write to express my strong support for the "Bar Removal of Individuals who Dream and Grow our Economy (BRIDGE) Act," S.128/H.R. 496. The BRIDGE Act protects the dignity of DACA-eligible youth by ensuring that these individuals, who were brought to the United States as children and are contributing so much to our nation, can continue to live their lives free of the anxiety that they could be deported at any time to a country they do not know and separated from their families.

I urge you to:

- Support and co-sponsor the BRIDGE Act (S.128/H.R. 496); and
- Continue to work towards larger legislative reform of our immigration laws.

The Catholic community stands with you in support of the BRIDGE Act and vows to work with you to reform our immigration system in a humane and common-sense manner.

**Sanctuary Prayer:** (by Jane Deren, PhD)

Who offered the stable for the birth of a child? Who offered refuge in Egypt when the family had to flee? Who welcomed them there? Who will offer sanctuary to the immigrants in our communities as they face roundups, as their human dignity is ignored? Who will welcome and protect them? Who will choose love and inclusion over fear? Who of us will recognize a holy family, a mother, a child? Who of us will remember Christ's words: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me; What you do for the least of these, you do for me." Amen

**Contact us**

Email: [jpvc.office@amormeus.org](mailto:jpvc.office@amormeus.org)

Office: 314 773 5100 ext. 13 | Cell: 314 707 7313

Blog: [www.saccvi.blogspot.com](http://www.saccvi.blogspot.com)