

Fleeing Into the Arms of America

Statement from Bishop Mark J. Seitz, D.D. of the Diocese of El Paso Texas, issued during Easter Week, on asylum seekers heading to the US.

“In the midst of a week in which we Christians continue to celebrate God’s mercy and Christ’s gift of peace to all humanity, I have learned of President Trump’s Executive Order ordering the National Guard to our Southern Border. It is my understanding that the National Guard is a military force intended for the protection of our nation. They assist in times of natural disasters or respond to an armed threat from a foreign military force.

I am left with many questions to which there appear to be no reasonable answer. To what threat are the citizen soldiers of our powerful nation responding? Why are we placing a military force on the border when the vast majority of those in our country without documents are here because they have overstayed their visa? Why are we further militarizing a border that we share with a peaceful neighbor at a time when undocumented immigration across our border is at a low ebb? Is our nation reacting to a ragtag group of Hondurans who are fleeing for their lives seeking refuge? They are fleeing from a nation controlled by narco-trafficking gangs flush with cash provided by our nation’s insatiable appetite for illegal drugs.



Members of a migrant caravan from Central America and their supporters look through the U.S.-Mexico border wall at Border Field State Park before making an asylum request, in San Diego, California, U.S. April 29, 2018. REUTERS/Lucy Nicholson



Members of caravan of migrants from Central America pray near the San Ysidro checkpoint after the first fellow migrants entered US territory to seek asylum, at an improvised shelter in Tijuana, Mexico, on April 30, 2018. Credit: Edgard Garrido/Reuters

This group is not invading, they are fleeing! They are not sneaking across an unguarded frontier, they are presenting themselves at border crossings and seeking asylum. They are seeking to enter our country legally following international asylum laws which our country had a major role in writing, to assure that people fleeing persecution and organized violence would be able to find safe refuge. If a just system were in place in which the lives of parents and children were secure, the vast majority of those entering our country from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America, Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador, would not have departed from community or family.

Has it now become a crime in our country to run for your life? Have we become so fearful and hypocritical that we would expect a country like Lebanon to accept a number 30% the size of their population from Syria, but we ourselves cannot accept a fraction of one percent of those fleeing from the countries with the highest homicide rates in the world? **If you were a Honduran whose children were being raped and told that they would have to do the gang’s bidding or die, what would you do?**

It is time for Mr. Trump to stop playing on people’s unfounded fears. I live on the border and my city is year after year one of the safest in the country. These troops are being asked to leave their families and their employment to come to our border where they can do battle against the wind. They will find no enemy combatants here, just poor people seeking to live in peace and security. They will find no opposition forces, just people seeking to live in love and harmony with their family members and neighbors and business partners and fellow Christians on both sides of the border.

A President’s use of military force is one of his most sacred trusts. I pray that our President will reconsider this rash and ill-informed action.”

Our Advocacy for Undocumented Immigrants Who were Brought to the U.S. as Children Continues....



Ask Your Representatives to Protect Dreamers by

**(1) Supporting H.R. 4796, the USA Act of 2018, and H.R. 3440, the DREAM Act of 2017; AND
(2) Moving Legislation Forward to a Vote in the House**

Without a legislative solution, Dreamers' futures remain uncertain and they live in fear of deportation. Congress should take urgent action to protect these extraordinary young people.

H.R. 4796, the **Uniting and Securing America (USA) Act of 2018**, was introduced by Rep. Will Hurd (R-TX) and Rep. Pete Aguilar (D-CA) in the House of Representatives and has more than 50 bipartisan co-sponsors. The USA Act would protect and provide Dreamers with a path to citizenship as long as they satisfy residency, age and education, military or employment requirements. Additionally, H.R. 4796 augments border security with the use of new technology, seeks to address root causes of migration from Central America, and increases staffing resources for immigration courts to carry out their work.

Go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org to send this request to your member of Congress.



**CAMPAIGN
TO WIN
EQUAL ACCESS
TO DRIVERS
LICENSES FOR
IMMIGRANTS
IN NY**

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SIGN ON LETTER: <http://bit.ly/GreenLightNY>

DRIVING TOGETHER

Farmworkers from our area are asking their allies to join with the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York and other groups in supporting the **Driving Together** campaign. This is an effort to pass legislation that would enable people living in New York State to obtain drivers licenses regardless of their immigration status.

Access to licenses would enable many farmworkers to buy and insure cars, and attend church services, go

shopping and get to medical appointments. Twelve other states, including our neighbors in Connecticut and Vermont, issue licenses regardless of immigration status. Why not New York?

To ask your Assembly member to co-sponsor **A10273** go to www.laborreligion.org/campaigns

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