

Civil ♦ Rights ♦ for ♦ All ♦ Immigrants

A Statement of the Gamaliel Foundation and Religious Leaders

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the stranger. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” --Leviticus 19:33-34

“And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? . . . ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” --Matthew 25:38,40

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” --Hebrews 13:2

1. We remember

that the biblical tradition reveals God as present in the strangers welcomed by Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18), as the liberator of the Chosen People from their forced sojourn and enslavement in the land of Egypt, and as a God of mercy “who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing” (Deuteronomy 10:18) and who commands the people of God to do the same (Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19);

that Jesus was a refugee in Egypt (Matthew 2) and is encountered in the experience of strangers, refugees, and migrants throughout history (Matthew 25:38);

and that as people of God we are part of a world-wide community, which extends beyond exclusionary borders and which embraces refugees and immigrants.

2. We affirm

that all human beings are created in the image of God and therefore enjoy an innate human dignity with the right to food, shelter, freedom and the opportunity to provide for their own good and the good of society;

that, historically, the United States “has consistently received immigrants, refugees, exiles, and the persecuted from other lands. Fleeing injustice and oppression and seeking liberty and the opportunity to achieve a full life, many have found work, homes, security, liberty, and growth for themselves and their families”¹;

and that in a world “in which global poverty and persecution are rampant, the presumption is that persons must migrate in order to support and protect themselves and that nations *who are able to receive them should do so whenever possible.*”²

3. We condemn

the harshness and inflexibility of many federal immigration laws; the prospect of detention of immigrants remote from legal representation and supportive community; the threat of deportation for minor offenses; the exploitation of undocumented immigrants, including their labor; the forced separation of immigrant families; and the punitive treatment, violence and death awaiting many immigrants who cross the borders of this nation by land and sea.

4. We call for

faith communities, people of faith and all people of good will to welcome, assist, and befriend immigrants;

faith communities, people of faith and all people of good will to speak out for just and fair treatment of immigrants;

public policy changes which secure civil rights for all immigrants, including:

- a broad legalization of undocumented immigrants who are contributing to the social and economic security of this nation
- full labor protection and labor rights for immigrants
- humane border enforcement policies that, while protecting the security of this nation, emphasize the safety and dignity of immigrants and offer a legal, safe, and orderly alternative for those seeking to cross our borders in order to work
- an end to the inhumane detention and warehousing of asylum seekers who have committed no crime and who have come to this country seeking freedom
- a reform of U.S. family-based legalization categories to encourage family unity in the immigration process
- an end to deportation for minor offenses
- protection of the civil liberties of all people regardless of citizenship

¹ *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.*” A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, number 15. Issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 22, 2003.

² *Ibid.*, number 39.

S ♦ I ♦ G ♦ N ♦ A ♦ T ♦ O ♦ R ♦ I ♦ E ♦ S

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Orthodox Church in America

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Pastor, St. Norbert, St. Louis

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The Rev. James V. Veltrie, S.J.,
staff, St. Louis University

Derechos Civiles Para Todo Inmigrante

Una Declaración de la Fundación de Gamaliel y Líderes Religiosos

“ Cuando un forastero viva junto a ti, en tu tierra, no lo molestes. Al forastero que viva con ustedes lo mirarán como a uno de ustedes y lo amarás como a ti mismo, pues ustedes también fueron forasteros en Egipto: ¡Yo soy Yavé, tu Dios! “ – Levítico 19:33-34

“ ¿Cuándo te vimos forastero y te recibimos, o sin ropa y te vestimos? ... 'En verdad les digo que, cuando lo hicieron con alguno de los más pequeños de estos mis hermanos, me lo hicieron a mí.' –Mateo 25:38,40

“ No dejen de practicar la hospitalidad, pues saben que algunos dieron alojamiento a ángeles sin saberlo.” – Hebreos 13:2

1. Recordamos

que la tradición bíblica revela a un Dios presente en los forasteros recibidos por Abrahán y Sara (Génesis 18), como el libertador del Pueblo Elegido de su jornada forzada y de su esclavitud en la tierra de Egipto, y como un Dios de misericordia “ que ama al forastero, dándole alimento y vestido “ (Deuteronomio 10:18) y que manda al pueblo de Dios a hacer lo mismo (Levítico 19: 34; Deuteronomio 10:19);

que Jesús fue un refugiado en Egipto (Mateo 2) y que es encontrado en la experiencia de los forasteros, los refugiados, e inmigrantes através de la historia (Mateo 25:38);

y que, como pueblo de Dios formamos parte de una comunidad mundial que abraza a refugiados e inmigrantes y que se extiende más allá de fronteras exclusionarias.

2. Afirmamos

que todo ser humano es creado a imagen de Dios y por ello goza de una dignidad humana inata con el derecho a la alimentación, el albergue, a la libertad y a la oportunidad de proveer por su propio bien y por el bien de la sociedad.

que, históricamente Los Estados Unidos “ ha constantemente recibido a inmigrantes, refugiados, exiliados, y los perseguidos de otras tierras. Huyendo de la injusticia, y la opresión y buscando la libertad y la oportunidad de lograr una vida llena, muchos han encontrado trabajo, hogar, seguridad, libertad, y desarrollo para ellos y sus familiares”¹;

y que, en un mundo “ en que la pobreza mundial y la persecución son rampantes, la presunción es que las personas deben de migrar para poder sostenerse y protegerse a ellos mismos, y las naciones que son capaces de recibirlos deben de hacerlo cuanto sea posible.”²

3. Condenamos

la severidad e inflexibilidad de muchas leyes federales inmigratorias; la perspectiva de la detención de inmigrantes lejos de un apoyo comunitario y de representación legal; la amenaza de deportación por ofensas menores; la explotación de inmigrantes indocumentados, incluyendo su labor; la separación forzada de familias inmigrantes; y el tratamiento punitivo, violencia y muerte esperando a muchos inmigrantes que cruzan las fronteras de esta nación por tierra y por mar.

4. Pedimos que

comunidades de fe, gente de fe, y a las personas de buena voluntad que reciban, asistan y que hagan amigos a los inmigrantes;

comunidades de fe, gente de fe, y a las personas de buena voluntad a hablar claro por un trato justo y equitativo de inmigrantes;

haya cambios de pólizas públicas que aseguran derechos civiles para todo inmigrante, incluyendo:

- una legalización amplia de inmigrantes indocumentados quien están contribuyendo a la seguridad social y económica de esta nación
- protección completa de labor y de derechos laborales para inmigrantes
- aplicación de pólizas humanas fronterizas que, mientras protegiendo la seguridad de esta nación, enfatizan la seguridad y dignidad de los inmigrantes y ofrecen una alternativa ordenada, legal, y segura para todos aquellos buscando cruzar nuestras fronteras para trabajar
- un fin a la inhumana detención y almacenamiento de aquellos buscando asilo que no han cometido ningún crimen y que han venido a este país buscando libertad
- una reforma de las categorías de legalización a base de familia en los E.E.U.U. para promover la unidad familiar en el proceso migratorio
- un fin a la deportación por ofensas menores
- protección de las libertades civiles de todo mundo no obstante su ciudadanía

1. *“Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.” A Pastoral Letter Concerning Migration from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, number 15. Issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 22, 2003.*

2. *Ibid.*, number 39.

The ♦ Gamaliel ♦ Foundation

The Gamaliel Foundation is a network of more than fifty congregation-based organizations working for justice in nearly every major metropolitan area in the Midwest. The network has a growing presence on the east and west coasts. Since 1998 the Gamaliel Foundation has fostered congregation-based organizing in three provinces in South Africa.

The Gamaliel Foundation provides local community leaders with exceptional resources such as extensive leadership training, strategic planning, development of issues of metropolitan equity, staff recruitment, staff development, and fundraising expertise.

The goal is to build powerful, effective, local and metropolitan organizations which become vehicles for leaders to participate in making decisions effecting their communities. Through their connection to the Gamaliel Network, local organizations are able to effect change at ever broader levels of power — state, regional, and national.

The Gamaliel Foundation builds on grass-roots empowerment and uses the tools of community organizing to advance progressive social transformation rooted in the faith values of its membership. This is evidenced in the National Leadership Assembly of the Gamaliel Foundation, an annual gathering of hundreds of delegates for Gamaliel affiliates which shapes and guides the mission and direction of the Gamaliel Foundation; in the Gamaliel Clergy Caucus, which offers theological training, resources, and representation for network clergy now numbering nearly two thousand; in NTOSAKE, a women's leadership program which offers training and a supportive network for women who are leaders in the affiliate organization of the Gamaliel Foundation, and in the newly formed African American Leadership Commission which is providing inspiration and hope for clergy who provide leadership for those who live daily with unfairness of spatial and economic racism.

The Gamaliel Foundation
203 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 808
Chicago, Illinois 60601
E-mail: gamalielus@sbcglobal.net
www.gamaliel.org