

## **CHAIR OF USCCB COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION URGES RESCISSION OF NEW RULE THAT UNDERMINES OUR ASYLUM SYSTEM AND PUTS VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES AT RISK**

August 12, 2019

WASHINGTON— Recently, the Trump Administration issued an “interim final rule” that would nearly eviscerate our current asylum system. A 30-day period was given to submit comments to the government about the rule. The move would allow the Administration to block most individuals arriving at our southern border from gaining access to asylum in the U.S. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops submitted comments on August 9th and called the rule “unlawful, unjust, and unwise.”

Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez, Bishop of Austin and chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, issued the following statement:

“We have grave concerns about the Administration’s interim final rule, issued on July 16, 2019, that greatly limits U.S. asylum eligibility at the southern border,” said Bishop Vásquez. “The rule would turn our back on the vast majority of asylum seekers, requiring them to apply for protection in almost any other country through which they transit, leaving access to U.S. asylum exceptionally rare. Not only do we believe that this rule is unlawful, but it also jeopardizes the safety of vulnerable individuals and families fleeing persecution and threatens family unity. Further, the rule undermines our nation’s tradition of being a global leader providing and being a catalyst for others to provide humanitarian protection to those in need. We remind the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security that how we respond to asylum seekers arriving at our border is a test of our moral character and strongly urge the Administration to rescind this rule.”