

STATEMENT REGARDING THEIR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT RESTRICTING ACCESS TO ASYLUM

November 14, 2018

Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, Presidents of Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Legal Immigration Network Issued Statement Regarding Their Deep Concern About Restricting Access to Asylum

WASHINGTON— Bishop Joe S. Vásquez, of Austin, Texas, Chairman of the U.S Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, Sister Donna Markham, OP, Phd, President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, Jeanne Atkinson, Executive Director of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, and Sean Callahan, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services issued an statement reiterating that it is not a crime to seek asylum and urging the Administration to seek other solutions that will strengthen the integrity of the existing immigration system.

On November 9, 2018, President Trump issued a proclamation (https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/presidential-proclamation-addressing-mass-migration-southern-border-united-states/?utm_source=link) barring people arriving to the U.S./Mexico border from receiving U.S. asylum unless they request it at a U.S. port of entry, a direct contradiction of existing U.S. asylum law (see <https://www.uscis.gov/ilink/docView/SLB/HTML/SLB/0-0-0-1/0-0-0-29/0-0-0-1687.html#0-0-0-192>)

The full statement follows:

“While our teaching acknowledges the right of each nation to regulate its borders, we find this action deeply concerning. It will restrict and slow access to protection for hundreds of children and families fleeing violence in Central America, potentially leaving them in unsafe conditions in Mexico or in indefinite detention situations at the U.S./Mexico border. We reiterate that it is not a crime to seek asylum and this right to seek refuge is codified in our laws and in our values. We urge the Administration to seek other solutions that will strengthen the integrity of the existing immigration system, while assuring access to protection for vulnerable children and families. The Catholic Church will continue to serve, accompany and assist all those who flee persecution, regardless of where they seek such protection and where they are from.”