

USCCB COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION AND CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AS WELL AS CATHOLIC CHARITIES USA ISSUE STATEMENT URGING HUMANE ACTION TOWARDS THOSE SEEKING PROTECTION

October 29, 2018

WASHINGTON— Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, Sean Callahan, President and CEO of Catholic Relief Services, and Sister Donna Markham OP PhD, President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA issued the following statement urging all people of goodwill to speak and act with compassion towards those migrating north and seeking refuge from violence and poverty.

The full statement follows:

“As Catholic agencies assisting poor and vulnerable migrants in the United States and around the world, we are deeply saddened by the violence, injustice, and deteriorating economic conditions forcing many people to flee their homes in Central America. While nations have the right to protect their borders, this right comes with responsibilities: governments must enforce laws proportionately, treat all people humanely, and provide due process.

We affirm that seeking asylum is not a crime. We urge all governments to abide by international law and existing domestic laws that protect those seeking safe haven and ensure that all those who are returned to their home country are protected and repatriated safely.

Furthermore, we strongly advocate for continued U.S. investments to address the underlying causes of violence and lack of opportunity in Central America. Our presence throughout the Americas has convinced us that migration is a regional issue that requires a comprehensive, regional solution. An enforcement-only approach does not address nor solve the larger root causes that cause people to flee their countries in search of protection.

As Christians, we must answer the call to act with compassion towards those in need and to work together to find humane solutions that honor the rule of law and respect the dignity of human life.”