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Give me your tired, your persecuted

A call to assist Central American refugees

In recent days, over 6,000 migrants have gathered at the California-Mexico border fence seeking appointments with American immigration officials to petition for asylum. With wait times projected to last for months, many are forced to live in shelters where food is scarce, and privacy is non-existent, and some become sick.

When large numbers of people cross borders to flee persecution, war, and disaster, they are considered refugees in the world's eyes, and many nations build refugee camps or absorb migrating people, helping families to resettle and educate the children. Presently, U.S. immigration officials admit 40-100 asylum seekers into California each day, recognizing the credible fear of danger and death if migrants return to their home nations. These young families tell stories of death threats and kidnapping threats to them and their children.

As Christians during the season of Advent, we recognize the ancient echo of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt, when Mary and Joseph hid the infant Jesus from the murderous Herod. We also recognize our obligation to help the oppressed and the homeless. We urge our fellow Episcopalians to appeal to government officials to speed up the processing of asylum seekers and to provide adequate shelters and legal assistance in the U.S. for recent immigrants.

We also encourage our fellow Episcopalians to work locally to provide shelter, legal aid, material support, and advocacy for asylum seekers. One way to help is to donate to organizations such as [Al Otro Lado](#), which connects immigrants with medical and legal services, and [San Diego Rapid Response Network](#), which provides temporary shelter and travel assistance to asylum seekers.

Let's work together to create a more compassionate immigration system and to alleviate the suffering of our neighbors.

Episcopal Public Policy Network of California

Signed in Cooperation,

The Rt. Rev. Marc Andrus, Bishop, Diocese of California

The Rt. Rev. Barry L. Beisner, Bishop, Diocese of Northern California

The Rt. Rev. John Taylor, Bishop, Diocese of Los Angeles

The Rt. Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce, Bishop Suffragan, Diocese of Los Angeles

The Rt. Rev. Mary Gray-Reeves, Bishop, Diocese of El Camino Real

The Rt. Rev. David Rice, Bishop, The Diocese of San Joaquin

The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Assisting Bishop, The Diocese of San Diego