

# Catholic Mission/Identity

By now you've noticed the new mission statement that the agency adopted last year "Feed the Hungry, Heal the Hurting, Welcome the Stranger." "Stranger" can mean a few different things in English. One meaning might be a person who is unknown to you. Another, closer to the use in most biblical sources, is "immigrant" or "alien". Not alien like someone from another planet, but alien in the sense of someone from outside the community, or from another land. So, at CCEW we welcome the strangers from other lands. Many of our program clients and many of our housing residents were born outside of the United States. For that matter, so, too, some of our staff. They have differing kinds of legal status. As our nation enters another phase of its ongoing struggle to define itself, the question of how to address our immigrant brothers and sisters – the strangers among us – is being renewed. Many of our immigrant brothers and sisters are fearful of what might come, fearful of being separated from family members, fearful of losing their job and homes. We are clear that we stand with them, regardless of their legal status. In the Catholic Church, we use the word "solidarity" to express this stand. Solidarity means that we are brothers and sisters – family – to every single other human person, no matter where they might be on Earth, or where they were born. The principle of solidarity will guide our communication and service to migrant communities in the coming months. There are whole chapters in theological textbooks unpacking the meaning of solidarity. But please know that for us, in this time and place, solidarity means that we will do our best to bring hope to the strangers among us.

Scott Cooper  
VP, Parish Social Ministry