



MARYKNOLL OFFICE FOR GLOBAL CONCERNS

Peace, Social Justice and Integrity of Creation

www.maryknollogc.org

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Maryknoll calls for compassionate welcome of Syrian refugees of all faith traditions

WASHINGTON, DC — The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns is shocked and heartbroken over the deaths of hundreds of people in recent terrorist attacks in Beirut, Paris, and Egypt. Together with our fellow members of Pax Christi International, we repudiate these despicable actions and stand in solidarity with the victims and their families.

At the same time, we are disturbed by the growing backlash to Syrian refugee resettlement in the U.S. More than twenty governors have said their states will not accept Syrian refugees, out of fear of potential terrorists entering the country --- despite the rigorous screening process by the Departments of State, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and the FBI. Some members of Congress are calling for the Obama Administration to halt resettlement of Syrian refugees, or to limit resettlement to Christians. Maryknoll does not support such xenophobic rhetoric.

Gerry Lee, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns said “We stand with more than 400 religious leaders who sent a letter to members of Congress on October 1, calling on the United States to welcome Syrian refugees from all faith traditions.” (Read the full letter at <http://www.maryknollogc.org/article/mogc-signs-letter-congress-urging-us-welcome-syrian-refugees-all-faith-traditions>)

The letter included:

“As the United States joins the world in seeking ways to meaningfully respond to the Syrian refugee crisis, it is paramount that the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) stay true to its mandate to resettle the most vulnerable. Vulnerable individuals from a host of religions, ethnicities and backgrounds have been and should continue to be resettled in the United States.

“Together, representing our various faiths, we decry derogatory language that has been used about our Muslim friends and neighbors. Inflammatory rhetoric has no place in our response to this humanitarian crisis. We ask our elected officials and candidates for office to recognize that new Americans of all faiths and backgrounds contribute to our economy, our community, and our congregations. Refugees are an asset to this country. They are powerful ambassadors of the American Dream and our nation’s founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all.

“As people of faith, our values call us to welcome the stranger, love our neighbor, and stand with the vulnerable, regardless of their religion. We pray that in your discernment, compassion for the plight of refugees will touch your hearts. We urge you to be bold in choosing moral, just policies that provide refuge for vulnerable individuals seeking protection.”

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) represents Maryknoll missionaries, who are Catholic men and women serving in impoverished communities around the world. The MOGC provides analysis and advocacy on issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation that affect the countries and communities where Maryknoll missionaries serve.

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