“I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

~ Matthew 25:35
SC Ministry Foundation Hosts Panel Discussion to Foster Understanding of Immigration and Integration Issues

On March 20, SC Ministry Foundation hosted a panel discussion, "Immigration and Integration" for more than 30 community advocates and nonprofit leaders interested in immigration issues. The panel featured Sister Nancy Crafton, SC, Director of Los Pobres in Avondale, Colorado; Jeanne Atkinson, Executive Director of Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) in Silver Springs, Maryland; and Donald Kerwin, Jr., Executive Director of the Center for Migration Studies in New York, New York.

"Our immigration laws do not value families," stated Sister Nancy. El Centro de Los Pobres, meaning "The Center for the Poor," is a non-profit ministry that serves the emergency needs of the immigrant and indigent population of southern Colorado. More than 200 families - most of them migrant farm workers - receive help weekly from the center, which ranges from food and clothing needs to medical care or financial assistance with rent and utilities.

Sister Nancy shared the trials of families who have been separated due to deportation and the horrific treatment many migrant adults and children face while in the detention centers.

Beyond the issues of tackling reform of immigration laws, the panelists also discussed the challenges that lie ahead for our country to successfully integrate immigrant families into society.
"Faith-based groups are uniquely qualified to assist with the integration of immigrants," shared Jeanne Atkinson of CLINIC. A subsidiary of U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), CLINIC supports the nation's largest network of charitable legal programs for immigrants. Its network consists of nearly 220 agencies, operating in 350 offices in 47 states. Collectively, this network serves 700,000 low-income immigrants each year.

Don Kerwin shared that 25% of the U.S. population consists of people who were foreign born and their children, and 30% of them lack legal status. The Center for Migration Studies (CMS) is an educational institute/think tank devoted to the study of international migration, to the promotion of understanding between immigrants and receiving communities, and to public policies that safeguard the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees and newcomers.

"Immigrants need Catholic institutions and Catholic institutions need immigrants," shared Don. "Integration requires immigration reform, but does not have to wait for it."

Jeanne agreed, citing that when legislation is passed to reform immigration laws, there will be potentially 8 million people in need of services. "We will need all hands on deck to help with integration."

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Our Commitment to Immigration Reform

In support of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati's Public Statement on Immigration, SC Ministry Foundation partners with a number of organizations locally, regionally and nationally which provide services for immigrants, including Los Pobres, CLINIC and the Center for Migration Studies.
SC Ministry Foundation has provided funding for The Catholic Immigration Integration Project, a study that began in January 2013 to identify successful integration programs within Catholic institutions and to develop a distinctly Catholic definition of integration that can guide the church’s work. The project is being coordinated by the Center for Migration Studies and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network and was featured in an article in the March-April issue of Health Progress, published by The Catholic Health Association of the United States.

Learn More

El Centro de Los Pobres

The Mission of Los Pobres is to serve the immigrant poor and local indigent citizens by providing those things necessary for survival: food, clothing and when possible, shelter.

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Photos of Los Pobres reprinted with permission from Catholic Extension.

Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC)

Embracing the Gospel value of welcoming the stranger, CLINIC promotes the dignity and protects the rights of immigrants in partnership with a dedicated network of Catholic and community legal immigration programs.

www.cliniclegal.org

Center for Migration Studies

The Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) is an educational institute/think tank devoted to the study of international migration, to the promotion of understanding between immigrants and receiving communities, and to public policies that safeguard the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees and newcomers.

www.cmsny.org
"Migration can offer possibilities for... a humanity for which every foreign country is a homeland and every homeland is a foreign country."

- Pope Francis, from his message on the World Day for Migrants and Refugees