



LCWR Statement on Welcoming Syrian Refugees

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious is horrified at the violence we witness in our world and appalled by the recent acts of bloodshed in Paris, Beirut, and throughout the Middle East. We continue to pray for all who suffer as a result of these senseless acts of terror.

We also pray for the strength and courage to respond to this violence with love and mercy. We refuse to let these acts of death and destruction sow the seeds of fear and mistrust that threaten to tear our communities apart and lead inevitably to more violence and harm.

We are witnessing the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War. More than 4 million Syrians have fled violence in their homeland and 12 million more are displaced internally. Syrian refugees are fleeing exactly the kind of terror that we have witnessed in these past few weeks. More than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives, many more have lost family, home, and community.

At a time when the world is in desperate need of humanitarian relief, some are calling for suspension of the US refugee resettlement program, an end to funding for Syrians, or a rationing of mercy based on religious creed. Such restrictions violate the tenets of our faith and the principles of our nation.

We reject the false choice currently being proffered by some in Washington, state capitols across the country, and on the campaign trail. We need not choose between the gospel call to welcome the stranger and our legitimate need for security. The protection that we rightly promise the world's refugees must not be denied to Syrians fleeing for their lives. The US refugee resettlement program has rigorous and multilayered security screenings to ensure that those we admit as refugees pose no threat to our security.

The present situation presents us with great challenges and many hard decisions. As Pope Francis reminded us just a few short weeks ago in his address to Congress,

Let us remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (*Mt 7:12*). This Rule points us in a clear direction. Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.

As women religious, as citizens of the United States, we choose to stand for life and hope. We will not give in to fear. We will not allow others to divide us by race or creed or nationality and we will not turn our back on our Syrian sisters and brothers in their hour of greatest need.

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