



**Leadership Conference of Women Religious Statement on  
Importance of Family Unity in Immigration Reform  
Sister Janet Mock, CSJ, Executive Director**

As women of faith we, the members of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), take seriously the gospel call to welcome the stranger and care for those in need. As Catholic sisters we are committed to the precepts of Catholic Social Teaching rooted in the Catholic tradition that remind us that the dignity of the person is at the core of our moral vision of society; that how we organize our society affects human dignity directly; and that any system that is deliberately cruel or inhumane needs to change. Because of these beliefs, at our 2012 national assembly, LCWR, "called on Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform that includes the reunification of families and a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants living in the United States."

Catholic sisters began coming to these shores 286 years ago as immigrants to serve immigrant populations. To this day they continue to minister to these aspiring citizens in schools and hospitals, in the fields and in the cities. They see the devastating effects of the brokenness of the current immigration system every day. They share the pain of mothers separated from their children and fathers who have risked their lives for love of their families.

The Senate framework and the principles laid out in the President's speech in Las Vegas provide hope to our immigrant brothers and sisters and promise that the values that are the bedrock of our national identity will flourish—family unity, equal opportunity, due process, and respect for the dignity of all God's children.

Today our broken immigration system too often splits families, separates spouses, and keeps parents from their children. Our nation needs, and our people deserve, immigration reform that reflects the paramount importance and socio-economic necessity of family unity; reform that does not pit one group of aspiring Americans against another. We need not sacrifice family unity to meet the needs of business and workers. We can and must protect families' and workers' rights.

Families are the very building blocks of our society. If given access to what is needed to live in healthy ways, it is in our families that we first experience the love of God. It is in our families that we learn to care for one another. It is in our families that we come to know that each of us can and must contribute to the common good and work with our neighbors to build a community where all can flourish.

We have the opportunity to honor parents who have sacrificed their own safety and risked their lives for the future of their children. We have the opportunity to reunite mothers with their sons and fathers with their daughters. If we fail to act we not only place the well-being of our mothers and fathers and children at risk, we threaten the heart and soul of our nation.

We look forward to working with lawmakers as they develop legislation that expedites the reunification of families, preserves family-based visa categories, reduces current backlogs, and provides humanitarian consideration for families.

LCWR is an association of leaders of congregations of Catholic sisters in the United States. The conference has nearly 1500 members, who represent more than 80 percent of the 57,000 women religious in the United States. Founded in 1956, the conference assists its members to collaboratively carry out their service of leadership to further the mission of the Gospel in today's world.