



SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
NATIONAL ADVOCACY CENTER
Rise Up AND Act for Justice

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Press Release: June 1, 2016

National Advocacy Center Joins Catholic Organizations and Stands with our Muslim Brothers & Sisters Against Hate

"Our Statue of Liberty does not screen for religion and our Constitution does not have a litmus test. America's strength comes not from our uniformity but from our diversity and from welcoming those fleeing other lands that bring with them new ideas and ingenuity.

"With the start of Ramadan next week, the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd joins with 12 other Catholic communities and organizations condemning not the fear, but the bigotry, hate and violence being brought against our Muslim brothers and sisters in the United States," said Larry Couch, director of the National Advocacy Center.

Today, the Catholic community released a statement against Islamaphobia that may be found at the end of this release.

Part of the statement reads, "Though fear of violent acts by terrorist groups worldwide is understandable, we must realize that Muslims are fearful, too. Many have had to flee their homes to keep their families safe from war and persecution, and here in the U.S. they are fearful of what those in places of privilege and power might say or do to them because of their religion."

Couch went on to say, "The National Advocacy Center is the advocacy voice for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. The Order was formed in 19th century France. From the beginning the Order sought to serve people living on the margin of society, especially women and children. The founder of the Order, St. Mary Euphrasia, maintained that, 'Each person is worth the whole world.'

"Based on that belief, the Order wholeheartedly supports Muslims living here in the United States. We should never turn our backs on anyone because of their religious or lack of religious beliefs."

The National Advocacy Center offers education through processes and strategies that address social justice issues and advocates for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people. The center reflects the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, working in solidarity with the disenfranchised - particularly families, women, and children.

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We, [national Catholic advocacy organizations](#), are very concerned about the hateful anti-Muslim rhetoric that is predictably spilling into further acts of violence around the United States. We hear from our Muslim sisters and brothers about how difficult it is to be an American Muslim today, and we lament the bigotry and Islamophobia coming from some politicians and commentators during the 2016 Presidential election cycle. The extent to which Muslims and others, who may appear to be Muslim, especially youth, have been demonized of late shows how far we still need to go as a society to realize our core value that each of us is created equal. We need to break our chronic pattern of de-humanizing groups of people.

Though fear of violent acts by criminal organizations worldwide is understandable, we must realize that Muslims are fearful, too. Many have had to flee their homes to keep their families safe from war and persecution, and here in the U.S. they are fearful of what those in places of privilege and power might say or do to them because of their religion.

We recognize that differences in race, religion and culture enrich, rather than endanger, our society. Now is the time for all Americans, especially people of faith, to speak out and build friendships with our Muslim neighbors. As Catholic Christians we acknowledge that the way of love, the Golden Rule, is integral to all major faith traditions and we witness to the truth that “love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

Catholic Alliance for the Common Good
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Faith in Public Life, Catholic Program
Franciscan Action Network
Ignatian Solidarity Network
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
NETWORK Advocates for Justice, Inspired by Catholic Sisters
Pax Christi USA
Pax Christi International
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Institute Justice Team