

Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd Position on Migration



1. Migration is a prevailing movement of our time, although throughout history people have always crossed borders, temporarily or permanently, for many reasons. The critical nature today of people journeying from their country of birth to life in another nation has prompted a global effort, led by the UN, to develop comprehensive, people-centered agreements: a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and a Global Compact on Refugees (GCR).

2. While migration enriches the social, cultural, and economic fabric of our world, it can be a difficult journey for anyone. For those facing conditions of poverty, food insecurity, degraded environment, natural disasters, chronic armed conflict with violence in civilian zones, inhumane labor conditions, rights violations, or grossly ineffective government, migration is a means to attain freedom and survival, to establish better social and economic opportunities. For those with meager resources, who must separate from families, cannot acquire legal documents or are stateless, have documents taken from them, cannot communicate in a new language, or lack education and job skills, it can be perilous and traumatic. Smugglers, terrorists, traffickers, abusive job recruiters and employers, and corrupt government systems and officials can exploit people in migration. When desperation motivates peoples' movement, grave risks abound and today the world sees a global trail of migratory deaths. Once people have left their countries of origin, they may face severe restrictions in movement, access to work, school, health care or other services. Confinement for long periods in abysmal camps or detention facilities, with little access to legal resources, is now common. Women and children face the most severe hazards during migration, especially unaccompanied or separated children. Likewise, women left in their home country when men migrate are often bereft of any protection or income for themselves or their children.

3. The movement of peoples today includes migrants, temporary workers, refugees, asylum seekers, internally-displaced persons (IDPs) and stateless persons, each defined under separate legal frameworks in national and international law; all are entitled to move in safety and dignity. The categorization of people in migration sometimes condemns them to being objects of suspicion and xenophobia, facing complex bureaucratic barriers to social support or inclusion. Yet realities of today can defy status categories, with situations often ambiguous and overlapping. Persons already suffering exclusion due to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, illness or age are subject to intensified discrimination when in migration.

4. We stress that all persons, regardless of migratory status, are rights holders whose protection is a moral imperative. The integrity of the family and the rights of children and spouses of migrants merit prominent consideration. People are not to be labeled criminals when they lack legal identification and papers while in movement. Existing barriers to human and labor rights' protection and free movement are to be challenged and changed. We reject xenophobic apprehension of "mass migration" that results in discriminations. While conventions and treaties exist, ratification and implementation lag; those most desperate to find personal and family security in either home or host society are the most disadvantaged.

5. We embrace our Judeo-Christian spiritual foundation that rests on a commitment to "welcome the stranger." Our first response to migrants and refugees is to welcome them as one would welcome the Divine among us. We honor the culture and heritage each brings and

we celebrate the positive contributions newcomers make to the lives and development of host communities. The service needs of persons in resettlement or status regularization are extensive, including language skills, health care, social integration, trauma healing, employment skills, legal help, etc. We listen to their experiences, accompany them, develop programs and work in partnerships to serve complex needs and to facilitate self-empowered social participation.

6. In responding to Migration, it is critical to:

a. Develop human rights-based services with partnerships across all areas of government and society. Creative cross-border OLCGS projects may be required. Give attention to SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 13, 16, 17 and particularly 10, all of which highlight the intersections of multiple needs on pathways to safe and sustainable futures.

b. Constantly strengthen knowledge and analysis of migration. Know the laws and agreements that support various categories of persons on the move; be aware of local realities, national and international processes, and implementation efforts and gaps.

c. Educate people on the move regarding their rights, facilitating them to be active social agents. Educate civic communities on the contributions of migrants. Reject xenophobia.

d. Ensure gender analysis in service planning on issues of migration. Give attention to women and children, sustaining family relationships of migrants and refugees, including communication with family in country of origin.

e. Work with long term solutions such as the UN Agenda 2030, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), and the GCM and GCR is essential.

f. Advocate, nationally and internationally, for policies and laws that respect human and labor rights, preserve family unity, ensure due-process judicial rights and increase safe and regular pathways for all migrants regardless of status. Seek changes in systems and structures that currently discriminate against those in migration. Speak for national adoption of universal social protection floors. Advocate for generous policies that provide protection for those fleeing oppression, violence, climate change and environmental ruin, food insecurity, etc., no matter the migratory status of the person. If return to one's home country is to occur, we support a process that is planned, dignified, within fair legal rights, with family unity considerations and with supports for reintegration.

g. Oppose efforts to restrict migration. Speak out against the failure to address political, social, and economic inequities that contribute to desperate movement. Work for sustainable local economies, national social protection floors, and accountable authority.

h. Know the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to Status of Refugees and its protocols. Support ratification of the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; bring light to the International Labor Organization (ILO) C-97 and ILO C-143. Use congregational NGO representatives and include migration issues of women, children and families in reports to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC.)



Glossary of acronyms used in OLCGS Position Papers

Alphabetically listed

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| CEDAW | Conventions on the Eliminating of all forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| GSIF | Good Shepherd International Foundation |
| GSIJPO | Good Shepherd International Justice Peace Office |
| GFMD | Global Forum on Migration and Development |
| GCM | Global Compact on Migration |
| GCR | Global Compact on Refugees |
| IDP(s) | Internally displaced person(s) |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organization |
| OLCGS | Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd |
| PP(s) | Position Paper(s) |
| SDG(s) | Sustainable Development Goal(s) |
| TIP | Trafficking in Persons |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| UNFAO | United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization |

Mission Development Process –

a diagram for Implementation of OLCGS Position Papers

The implementation of the OLCGS Positions in Mission and Ministry requires effective program development. The diagram below, based on the work of the GSIF and adapted by the GSIJPO, provides interrelated elements necessary for an integrated process of mission development. It can be adapted and enhanced for all levels of programs, communities, and formation. Groups can analyze their own strengths and needs by consideration of the total framework. Development can take any starting point along the schema and will necessarily move to interact with and include all elements, resulting in a dynamic process of ongoing learning, change, and development. Some elements will require technical help and professional training; many will challenge a sense of security or routine. All are critical to meet the mission demands of today.

