

## Resolution #1 – On Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese:

### Offering Sacred Welcome to Immigrants

#### Submitted by:

The Rev. Joseph M. Constant, Rector, St. John's Episcopal Church, Beltsville; Mr. Franklin Lemus, member and Lay Delegate, Iglesia Episcopal San Mateo; the Rev. Kimberly Lucas, Rector, St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, D.C.; Fr. Vidal Rivas, Senior Priest, San Mateo; and the Rev. Richard Mosson Weinberg, Associate Rector, St. Margaret's. Endorsed by the Race and Social Justice Task Force of the Diocese of Washington, Dr. Enid LaGesse, Co-Chair.

**Resolved**, that the people of the Diocese of Washington, as disciples of Jesus Christ and persons of faith and conscience, take seriously the biblical mandate to “honor the immigrant in our midst as one of our own” (*Lev. 19:34*), and in faithfulness to our Baptismal Covenant, oppose policies that target undocumented immigrants for deportation while also placing undue restrictions on refugees seeking safe haven in the U.S.; and be it further.

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Washington encourage its congregations and institutions to serve as places of welcome and healing, and to provide other forms of material and pastoral support for all persons, regardless of immigration status, and that we work alongside our neighbors to ensure the dignity and human rights of all people; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Washington, including its congregations and institutions, support Episcopal Church initiatives to engage in education, organizing, advocacy, legal direct action, and other methods as deemed appropriate in each context to ensure the safety and security of all immigrants and refugees; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Washington pledge to support and encourage congregations and their members to continue the work begun to respond to previous General Convention and Diocesan resolutions that advocate meaningful reform of U.S. immigration laws and policy, and recognize that the root causes of undocumented immigration into the U.S. are multi-faceted and complex, and should be addressed with a combination of humanitarian and economic foreign aid; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Washington pledge to assist in equipping congregations, clergy, and lay leaders to engage in such work, appropriate to local contexts, capacity, and discernment.

#### Explanation:

The United States of America is a nation of immigrants who have enriched and sustained our nation. Nonetheless, immigrant families suffer on the margins of our society. They are scapegoated during difficult economic times and victimized by harsh anti-immigrant governmental policies.

The current Administration has engaged in a deliberate effort to reduce the number of foreigners living in the U.S. Of particular concern are steps taken by the federal government to target and deport undocumented immigrants, including veterans who have served honorably in the U.S. military. The Administration is also employing “Expedited Deportation” without Due Process for individuals convicted of neither a felony nor a violent crime. Regrettably, data available from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) indicate that arrests of undocumented immigrants were up more than 40 percent in 2017, compared to 2016. We also lament the elimination of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which has granted temporary protection from deportation for hundreds of thousands of young people who have called the U.S. home for most of their lives. Other immigrants among us are at risk of deportation due to the termination of their Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Such actions have caused immigrants in this country tremendous and unwarranted fear and distress. They fear more than ever the break-up of their families, the loss of homes and businesses, and the destruction of the lives they have built in this country, often over decades.

Above all, we submit this resolution to Diocesan Convention as leaders of congregations whose members are directly impacted by the aforementioned realities. An estimated 23% of the population in the Washington, D.C.,

metropolitan area are foreign-born immigrants, and one-third of the parishes in the Diocese of Washington serve as the spiritual homes of many of these people. Our growing multicultural parishes are seeking to meet the unique needs of immigrant communities facing persecution, but more help and resources are needed. As the primary body for expressing common concerns of the Diocese of Washington, we submit this resolution to Diocesan Convention because its passage would send a message of solidarity to the hundreds of immigrants in our midst. We stand with them and ask that our Diocesan Convention do the same.