February 2024

***RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS***

***We commit ourselves to encountering and seeking the Holy in ourselves,***

***In each other, in the people of all cultures, lifestyles, and economic status.***

ATT: Kenneth Paxton

 Attorney General: State of Texas

The Dominican Sisters ~ Grand Rapids with their Associates and Friends are committed to the dignity of each human being and to living the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus. Our Congregation has, from its beginnings, engaged in immigration ministry beginning with our commitments to teach and minister in immigration schools and parishes since our coming to this country from Germany in 1853. We have continued that ministry consistently with education, health care, ESL programs, citizenship preparation, assisting in the establishment of Freedom House (Detroit) to shelter immigrants in need of legal and pastoral care and *Centro Mujeres de la Esperanza* (El Paso), an organized supportive presence at the border with women and their children, as well as volunteering at the border to assist the ministry of Annunciation House .

Out of our experiences and commitments, we give our support for Annunciation House which has offered hospitality to thousands of migrants in El Paso responding to the needs created by decades of neglect by the U.S. government to provide a safe, orderly and humane migration process. We abhor the increasingly aggressive responses by the State of Texas that not only punish migrants for the simple act of seeking safety but also target those who offer aid as a response of faith. At Annunciation House, which has coordinated with the U.S. Border Patrol and ICE and other community partners, migrants can find food, clothing and shelter as they prepare to leave El Paso on the next leg of their journey.

We join with Bishop Mark Seitz who described the work of Annunciation House as *“an example of our Catholic commitment to the poor, the Christian call to love one’s neighbor, and stepping into the breach to take action where many will not.”* We acknowledge a deep debt of gratitude to Annunciation House. We stand with Annunciation House staff and volunteers as they face this unjust attempt to criminalize their crucial service.

We call upon the State of Texas to cease and desist their oppressive actions toward immigrants and against Annunciation House.