Basic Human Needs – The Catholic Church teaches that every person has basic human rights and is entitled to have basic human needs met – food, shelter, clothing, education, and health care.

Fear of undocumented – Undocumented persons are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous employers, and sometimes do not complain for fear of discovery and deportation.

Criminalization – current immigration policy criminalizes the mere attempt to immigrate and imprisons immigrants who have committed no crime or who have already served a just sentence for a crime is immoral. Before God we can not excuse inhumane treatment of certain persons by claiming that their lack of legal status deprives them of rights given by the Creator.

Not serving the Common Good – immigration policy that allows people to live here and contribute to society, but refuses to offer them the opportunity to achieve legal status does not serve the common good. The presence of million of people living without access to basic human rights and necessities is a great injustice.

Statistics: 27,000 women, men and children are in custody every month. 270,000 people were deported which means 270,000 families were separated. In the last four years, 66 immigrants have died in immigration custody including Hasiba Balbachir a young woman from Algeria who was found dead in her cell in the McHenry County Jail in Woodstock.

Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform (CCIR) USCCB’s implementation of Strangers No Longer. June 2005. Goals:
1) To educate Catholics and others of good will about the benefits of immigration and benefits of immigrants to our country
2) To strengthen public opinion about the positive contribution of immigrants
3) To advocate for just immigration laws which promote legal status and legal pathways for migrant workers and their families to migrate in a safe, humane and orderly manner
4) To organize Catholic legal service networks to assist immigrants in accessing the benefits of reforms.

Education: We need to change people’s heart first, before we change the law. First, we need to see the other/the stranger as my brother and sister, as someone who I’m connected to. All of us were created at the image of God. When I see, when I recognize that the other/the stranger is part of me.. because we both, WE are children of God… we come from the same creation.. we have the same father, therefore I will be in communion. We need to live in common – union. We will be in a host and guest relationship…in the Catholic faith the Eucharist expresses beautifully this relationship of communion… Jesus is the host and we’re the guest. We’re invited to share the meal, receive our sustenance SO we go to the world, to society, to our communities to be the host… I call this dynamic cycle of our FAITH, cycle of LIFE. If I see my brother and sister this way, yes I’ll be compel to respond to the needs of my brother and sister, his/her issues will be my issue. When I learned that there are 12 million undocumented people in this country and a broken immigration system, I will be moved to act. I will be in solidarity. I’ll participate to seek justice for immigrants.

Therefore education/conversion is critical. In the last three years we

• Sharing stories: An immigrant person/family share story that includes faith sharing in their struggles with immigration issue. It usually a story telling is associated with a workshop or
presentation or a specific request for action: filling post-cards, make phone calls, etc. 150 parishes in 2005-2006

- Presentation/workshop: on topic: Catholic Social Teaching and immigration, myths and facts on economy, health, education, employment, criminalization, detention, etc. Bank of speakers available to schools, religious ed programs, seminaries, colleges. Presentation to over 50 schools, training to principals, teachers, etc.
- Homily: a priest will cover immigration issue during Mass.
- Website: provide materials directly to school, college, parishes systems or provide links to local and/or national websites i.e. strangers no longer, etc.
- Video presentation: usually a discussion is followed a video presentation
- Media: writing articles on diocesan newspapers, participating in diocesan radio and TV programs, organizing a press conference to reach out general public

Advocacy

- Collection of cards: in 2006 collecting 200,000 cards from 150 parishes opposing the Sembembrenner bill criminalizing even clergy who serve immigrants. 40,000 cards from immigrants and non-immigrants requesting contact to elected officials to support immigration reform. Old immigrants/new immigrants.
- Prayer service and rallies at Speakers of the House
- Pilgrimage- participation of 12 parishes from Chicago to Batavia
- Marches with parish banners and symbols – identifying ourselves as Catholics and not only with community organizing groups. March 10 and May 1 2006, May 1, 2007
- Phone calls – e-mails to elected officials in state for drivers certificates, in DC for immigration reform

Areas of work now that the law did not pass

1) Education to immigrant community on basic rights for protection
   “Know your rights” campaign - what to do or not to do to avoid deportation
   Catholic Social Teaching principles as base for protection of rights
   Working in collaboration with community based organizations and the Consulate of Mexico
   Identity as CCIR effort to reach out immigrants through immigrant parishes
   Availability of several educational tools: video, story telling, sketch, supporting homily
   Legal representation for Q&A. 25 attorneys, 20 parishes to date
   Promoting the Church is supporting/protecting immigrants
   Blessing of homes – teaching families to bless each part of their homes and teach the children How to protect when ICE comes to the home.

2) Deportation/Detention

WHAT: Rosary at Broadview, IL Immigrant Detention Center
WHEN: Every Friday at 7:15 a.m.
DESCRIPTION: For over a year, the faithful have been gathering early on Friday mornings in front of the immigrant detention center in Broadview, IL to pray the rosary. It’s a powerful expression of solidarity and prayerful support for our immigrant brother and sisters in Christ as they are being loaded onto buses for deportation from the U.S. The gathering, led by women religious of the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants organization, is orderly and peaceful; all participants stay outside physical
boundaries established by the Broadview facility. The public rosary lasts about a half hour and draws attention to a U.S. immigrant detention system that deprives detained immigrants, who have not violated criminal law, protection of basic liberties afforded inmates in the criminal system. The unjust system of detention, which can become indefinite without recourse to remedy, falls under the radar screen of most of the American public.

**DIRECTIONS:** To reach the Broadview facility, take the Eisenhower to 25th Avenue South; at the top of the ramp turn left to Lexington (the stop light). Turn right on Lexington to Beach (the next street). Turn left on Beach and look for the barbed wire fence on the right hand side, in front of the detention center building.

**LOGISTICS:** Meet at the location by 7:15am. There is no ongoing commitment – come as often as you can. If questions, contact Sr. Pat Murphy (773) 779-6011.

**WHAT:** Immigration “Court Watch”

WHERE: Detention Court, 101 W. Congress Parkway

WHEN: Weekdays, 9am-12pm, 1pm-4pm

DESCRIPTION: A court watch program has been established by women religious of the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants network for volunteers to help monitor what is happening at Chicago Immigration Court’s Video-Teleconferencing Deportation Hearings. Since 2002, videoconferencing has increasingly become a substitute for in-person deportation hearings for immigrant detainees, who during court proceedings remain in a holding cell at a remote site – without an interpreter or even the attorney representing them at their side as their fate (and potential permanent separation from their families) is decided. Volunteers sit in the courtroom during the hearings in the role of observer to help keep the judge and litigators accountable for providing immigrants fair and humane treatment and representation.

LOGISTICS: Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants organization facilitates participation and scheduling of prospective volunteers in Court Watch, since there is a courtroom-access procedure and observer seating is limited. The program is best suited for people who are open to a regular schedule of participation. If interested, contact Sister JoAnn Persch (773) 779-6011.

**Support passage of the Access to Religious Ministry Act HB 2747:** 26,000 immigrants in the country are detained and deported per month. In 2007, 270,000 undocumented immigrants were deported from the country. For those immigrants detained in Illinois, it is often very difficult for religious ministers to gain access to them. There are often times when a detainee is unable to talk to a priest or deacon, have confession or participate in liturgy. This legislation will help ensure that clergy and religious workers can provide religious ministry to immigrants being detained in certain Illinois county jails. Please contact your legislator and ask him/her to support this bill. To identify your legislator visit the Catholic Conference of Illinois (CCI) website at www.catholicconferenceofillinois.org then, click on "Find Your Legislator" located on the right hand side of the website. CCI is supportive of this legislation. A fact sheet on HB 2747 is also available on this website.

**The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, (IIRIRA – examples of families separated)**

IIRIRA also precluded judicial review of many immigration decisions, meaning the courthouse door is closed to many who have meritorious claims. Section 212(a)(9)(B) provides for three and ten year bars to returning, for those who have been undocumented in the United States and who have to process for a visa outside the U.S. An example of this is a client of mine Edith R. She is a U.S. citizen, who is married to a Mexican national. She filed a visa petition for him, and he went from Chicago to Ciudad Juarez for his visa appointment. There he was told that he had a 10 year bar to returning because he had been in the United States undocumented for more than a year. He applied for a waiver, but that
was denied. Under the law, the hardship to his United States citizen children, is not relevant.

Janina W is a native and citizen of Poland, who is the mother of a 6 year old U.S. citizen child. The immigration judge denied her application in the exercise of discretion, a decision which could not be reviewed in Federal Court because of the 1996 law. Her husband is a U.S. citizen, but she is still facing a ten year bar to returning.

Peter D. is also from Poland. He was ordered deported at a hearing for which he did not receive notice. He is the father of three United States citizen children. The youngest of his children was born while he was in ICE custody in Kenosha. He was deported last week, and faces a ten year bar to return. He is not eligible for a waiver.

IIRIRA added Section 241(a)(5) reinstatement to the Immigration Act. In 2006 the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision involving Umbarto Fernandez Vargas, a Mexican national who is married to a United States citizen, and the father of a 13 year old U.S. citizen son who suffers from asthma. He applied for permanent residence based on the marriage and 245(i). Immigration took him into custody at the interview, telling him that they were reinstating a 1981 deportation under IIRIRA. He was deported while his case was pending. The Supreme Court upheld deportation, determining it was not an impermissibly retroactive application of law. Umberto now faces a ten year bar to returning to the U.S.

Need to work ecumenically – inter-faith
Situation: We’re doing independent work. Society is not seeing us as a “community of faith”. There is a need to start working together. To know each other, to dialogue, to develop common strategies for two reasons: 1) to strength our work and leverage our efforts 2) to give testimony that we’re guided by our faith.
Invitation to start dialogue.