

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact**

Kylene Kamensky  
Communications Coordinator  
Sisters of the Humility of Mary  
724-964-8920, ext. 3236

**HM Sisters Encourage Understanding and Advocacy in Response to Recent Headlines**

VILLA MARIA, Pa. – The Sisters of the Humility of Mary have long stood in solidarity with and advocated for the human dignity of all persons. Their mission of bringing more abundant life to all God’s people has been the driving force behind their congregation’s words and witness going back to their founding in France in 1854.

With statements on immigration recently issued by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and other faith communities, and the Diocese of Pittsburgh having called for solidarity and action in response to the deadly shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue, the sisters have released two statements of their own in response to U.S. immigration policies and the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue to join their collective voice to the national conversation. The full statements are available on the sisters’ website, [humilityofmary.org](http://humilityofmary.org).

“We’re raising our own voice in response because our faith and our mission compel us to speak out in situations where people are dehumanized, exploited and even killed. As Americans, we stand by our U.S. Declaration of Independence that states clearly that all people have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” said Sr. Toby Lardie, HM Pastoral Leader.

The congregation has a history of advocating for migrants and refugees in part because the early HM Sisters walked the path of immigration. When the entire community of 11 sisters along with Fr. John Joseph Begel and four orphans made the journey from France in 1864, they left behind everything they knew to make their home in their new adopted country.

“We are deeply troubled by the U.S. policies and the practices of U.S. corporations which have helped to fuel the violence and humanitarian crisis that currently exists in Central America, especially at this time in Honduras,” reads part of the immigration statement issued by the congregation. “We are greatly saddened by President Trump’s continued practice of denigrating those who are suffering and his administration’s policy of rejection, detainment and incarceration of asylum seekers. We are appalled at the language that has turned this human crisis into a military ‘emergency,’ an ‘invasion’ to which our government is choosing to respond with a massive armed force. We join our voices with those of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) and a host of faith communities in opposing the Trump administration’s policy of banning asylum seekers on the southern border.”

In response to the shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue, the sisters offer their condolences to the Jewish Community of Pittsburgh.

“Once again our nation is mourning the senseless loss of life, this time at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. As Sisters of the Humility of Mary who seek to bring more abundant life to all God’s people, we join with other faith leaders in sorrow and solidarity with our Jewish sisters and brothers and all those who value life in this latest moment of grief,” reads the congregation’s statement. “We recommit ourselves to the call we expressed on earlier occasions of such violence: to use our voice to demand reasonable gun control and support services to identify and address the real needs of those who suffer from emotional, psychological and mental challenges. We invite others to join us in advocating for the change that is needed in gun legislation and the allocation of resources to heal and care for all those who live within the borders of this nation.”

The Sisters of the Humility of Mary is a community of women religious, whose motherhouse, Villa Maria Community Center, has been located in Villa Maria, Pa. since 1864. Their mission of bringing more abundant life to God’s people, especially the poor, is carried out in multiple ways and through various sponsored ministries.

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