

**IMMIGRATION MATTERS March 2017 – April 2017**  
*Office of Peace, Justice and Integrity of Creation, Sisters of Charity of New York*



**Hospitality in a Time of Hate: Religious Leadership for an Inclusive City Under the Trump Administration.** On April 5, Sister Carol De Angelo was one of over 120 diverse New York religious leaders attending the 33rd Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreat, "Hospitality in a Time of Hate," hosted by Interfaith Center of New York. Panels addressed: "Resistance, Advocacy & Sanctuary Spaces for Immigrants & Refugees", "Empowering Communities Against Hate Speech and Hate Crimes", and "Interfaith Solidarity and Emerging Muslim-Jewish Alliances." For all of us who participated, it raised the following questions:

**H**ow are we being called as faith leaders to stand with our brothers and sisters? What is our response to the rising number of hate speech, crimes and behaviors? What does our faith call us to do, as families are being separated? Where do we stand on behalf of "welcoming the stranger" in our midst? What actions can we take, individually and together?



**Interfaith Seder**

"LET MY PEOPLE STAY" – From Slavery to Freedom, From Deportation to Staying Home. Immigration advocates gathered for an Interfaith Seder at Federal Plaza on April 11, 2017 to begin their Interfaith Seder. With Ravi Ragbir and Ramesh J. Palaniandi freed temporarily, the Seder focused on those immigrants who were still being held by ICE and those who were being required to "check-in" on a regular basis. Those gathered then marched to NYU Law School to complete the rest of the Seder.

Music and song added to the celebration and renewed commitment to ACCOMPANY our immigrant friends whenever and wherever they needed us.



**New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) Policy Breakfast** attended by Bruce Segall.

FEAR was the dominant theme as three panels addressed issues that NYIC was facing in Health Services, Protection and Integration of Immigrants, and the challenges in the Education of Children. The annual Policy Breakfast was held on March 21, 2017. The Health Services panel highlighted key opportunities for NYC to make information and health care available to all, regardless of immigration status. The Immigrant panel discussed new challenges faced by immigrant communities across the five boroughs who are seeking resources in an ever-

changing federal landscape. The Education Panel focused on creating safe, welcoming and supportive learning environments for students and families in the post-election context. Check [www.thenyic.org](http://www.thenyic.org) for resources and information.



**Justice for Immigrants (JFI) Call-Ins: Executive Orders/World Refugee Day** JFI had their National Call-in on April 6, 2017. The March 6th Executive Orders were explained. However, once again a Federal

District Court, this time in Hawaii, issued a temporary restraining order halting the implementation of the travel ban and the suspension of refugee resettlement process. Family Separation has been a key concern and many advocates and lobby groups have raised their concern, including the Bishops. A second call-in had to do with World Refugee Day 2017 being planned for June 20, 2017. Ideas, media strategies and new materials are being shared around the country and the Immigration Task Force is planning an informational and celebratory event. Check the Toolkit at the Website <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/2016site/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/WRD-2017-Toolkit.pdf>

**College of Mount Saint Vincent Refugee Presentation on April 18, 2017,** offered by Kate McGeogan, a CMSV student who spent her Fall 2016 semester on the island of Lesbos, and Doug Kunz, photojournalist, who documented the situation of the refugees on the island of Lesbos, Greece, was graphically illustrated in pictures, especially of the children and of one baby born on route. Kate volunteered with a Church outreach program and tried to engage these children, after their horrific experiences as refugees, in games, art and English classes. Kate plans to return. Doug documented the shoreline tragedy, the make-shift camps and the worried parents. Volunteers seemed to be the only visible help. The stress refugees were experiencing was causing heart failure. A doctor told Doug that heart defibrillators would help save lives. It took Doug only 19 days after he returned home to collect thousands of dollars for several heart defibrillators. Besides food, water and clothing, there is need for battery lights, for tents (which are unprotected and often raided by Turkish smugglers who kidnap people for trafficking). The second step on the refugees' journey is to walk 40 miles to Athens if they are cleared. One beautiful story highlighted a family of a mother with five children who had held onto their beautiful, white Persian cat all the way from Iraq. In Greece, the cat got lost and they had to tearfully move on without it. When the cat was found, Doug put ads in Greece and Germany where he thought the family had gone. He did not know their name. With the help of others, the family was discovered in Norway. A tearful, joyful reunion ensued that is now recorded in a children's book entitled, THE LOST AND FOUND CAT. By telling the whole story of this family, many more people have become aware of the plight of the refugees. *Thank you, Sister Lorraine Cooper for this summary! For Ashley Lushinsky, PJIC intern, "Biggest difference was made by volunteers who had no special skill set. They left everything to help and made a big impact on the refugees."* Bruce Segall, April 26, 2017



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