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Mission statement March 2022

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Uniting for Change: The Mission of Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants

Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants (SBI) was founded in January 2007 by Sisters in the Archdiocese of Chicago with great hope and energy for immigration reform. Within weeks, we chose to expand membership to both brother religious and to associate/oblato members of religious congregations. At the beginning, members came from 30 different congregations. By 2011, our members numbered 170 from 54 congregations. In 2014 SBI became a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation.

Many sisters and brothers were/are involved with immigrants in their parishes, schools, neighborhoods or other ministries. Monthly meetings were held first at the archdiocesan offices and then at other venues until the onset of COVID in 2020 and we entered Zoom-land. Monthly meetings are currently scheduled on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 1-3 p.m. (We are open to other days and times depending upon availability of members.)

As we got to know each other, needs surfaced, as did opportunities for volunteering, lobbying local, state and federal authorities, prayer and solidarity. SBI became a seed bed for many ministries which are thriving today.

Pastoral Migratoria in the Archdiocese of Chicago and nationally.

ICDI, Initially the Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants, now the Illinois Community for Displaced Immigrants. Many participated in Court Watch, Post Detention Action Network (accompanying those released from ICE detention), lobbying Springfield for drivers' licenses, visiting detainees in ICE detention centers, abolishing immigration detention centers in Illinois, finding housing for migrants, etc.

VHH-Viator House of Hospitality, an alternative to detention for men between the ages of 18-22 founded by the Clerics of St. Viator.

BHH--Bethany House of Hospitality an alternative to detention for women and children between the ages of 18-22, co-sponsored by a group of women's religious communities.

Friday Vigil at the Broadview Detention Center in Broadview, IL in person and on Zoom. Every Friday morning at 7:15 a.m., the rosary is prayed for those being deported and for their families, for ICE and USCIS officials, for those who died in detention and for immigration reform. Contact Mark Goebel at mgoebel@archchicago.org to receive the link.

The mission of SBI is threefold: Education, Advocacy and Public Witness

Beginning in 2010, SBI held annual educational events throughout the Archdiocese, until the onset of COVID. In September 2023, we held our first post-COVID annual educational event at Dominican University in River Forest, entitled WELCOMING MIGRANTS, a Civic and Faith Response.

A weekly alert is sent out for actions on advocacy, knowledge, prayer and actions for legislation and policies. Contact S. Rose Therese Nolta at jpicssps@yahoo.com to get on the list.

SBI members did public witness by participating in marches for immigration reform, standing in solidarity with the Muslim Community, registering voters with NETWORK's NUNS ON THE BUS, standing on street corners before the monthly meeting to promote immigrants' rights and participating in the archdiocesan annual Posada in December. For many years, SBI held an annual interfaith prayer service at St. Viator Church in January at the end of National Migration Week.

With the new arrivals in the Chicagoland area these past two years, the networks with whom we are connected have been invaluable in terms of coordinating resources, finding housing, and taking people to court. "Welcome the stranger" is the gospel mandate we take seriously. In a spirit of gratitude, we want to generously share the resources we have.

Who We Are

Today, a small but committed group strives to carry on the mission. Over the last 17 years, many members have moved out of state, been elected to leadership, retired or have moved into the mystery beyond this one. Currently there are about two dozen who regularly meet to share hope, resources and energy. In the words of one of our members, *"For me, Sr. Rose Therese Nolta, I am energized through the SBI group each month because we are united in so many ways and we bounce off ideas and energy from one another. It is just good to be part of the group."*

We welcome you to join us—COME and SEE. No membership dues or commitment.

How to Become a Member

Contact Brother Michael Gosch, CSV, at mgosch@viatorians.com to join the monthly meeting or to get information. Visit the SBI website: sistersandbrothersofimmigrants.com and SBI Facebook: facebook.com/sistersandbrothersofimmigrants.

SBI is a fabulous support group for those of us involved with our sisters and brothers from other lands. It is a chance for interfaith efforts and sharing of resources and hope. We are the face, feet, and hands of Christ who welcome all to the table of life.

Please join us. We look forward to meeting you and sharing your hopes, energy, dreams and schemes for immigration reform. Welcome. We live in hope.

Compiled by Bernadine Karge OP August 2024