

St. Vincent de Paul Parishioners Advocate for Undocumented Immigrants

The dates that follow represent just some of the involvement of St. Vincent parishioners in advocacy for immigrants and with the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia. We expect that in coming months and beyond we will be called to greater advocacy and support of immigrants as we confront the broken immigration system in our country.

June 2008 – Two parishioners attend the first meeting of representatives from congregations with a background in the original Sanctuary Movement, at Mishkan Shalom. Purpose: to form a sanctuary movement with a new focus.

2008 to today - The Peace and Justice Ministry of St. Vincent de Paul Parish discerns involvement with the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia.

January 2010 – Sister Mary Kay Flannery, Justice for Immigrants Campaign coordinator, informs the Justice and Peace Ministry of the concern of the Catholic Bishops for immigration law reform.

January 2010 – Gathering of parishioners to hear a new parishioner share his involvement with undocumented immigrants and to sound a call to welcome the stranger in our midst.

February 2010 – Peter Pedemonti and Jen Rock, New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia coordinators, outline the goals and activities of the organization at a meeting with 30-plus members of the parish.

March 2010 – Msgr. Joseph Shields, Vicar for Hispanic Ministry of the Archdiocese, speaks to parishioners about the concerns of the Catholic Church for undocumented immigrants.

March 2010 – Six parishioners join the March for America for immigration reform in Washington, D.C.

June 2010 – Fourteen parishioners attend a public forum in South Philadelphia in support of a New Sanctuary Movement initiative. The Vice Mayor and representatives of the District Attorney's office hear of immigrant concerns about community safety.

October 2010 – Parishioners support New Sanctuary Movement at its first fund raising event.

November 2010 – Three parishioners join New Sanctuary Movement demonstration outside the Philadelphia District Attorney's office to highlight the insecurity of Philadelphia's immigrant communities due to the police department's reporting procedures to Federal authorities.

January 2011 – Two parishioners, along with others from the New Sanctuary Movement, accompany Francisco Rios at his trial. He is declared innocent, and now may be eligible to receive a U.S. visa.

February 2011 – Undocumented immigrant Francisco Rios comes to St. Vincent to share his stirring testimony about police abuse he suffered and to call us to action to defend immigrant rights.

March 2011 – Parishioner Sara Vazquez meets with parishioners to ask for prayer and accompaniment for her husband who was facing possible deportation.

March 2011 – Four parishioners and a New Sanctuary representative accompany Sara Vazquez and her husband Antonio Gonzalez at an immigration hearing. The judge continues his case to January of 2012.

April 2011 – Fourteen parishioners take part in an interfaith pre-Seder at Mishkan Shalom Congregation. New Sanctuary Movement congregations participate in a ritual focused on the plight of undocumented immigrants and farm workers.

April 2011 – Four parishioners attend a public debate at the Broad Street Ministries church on immigration law sponsored by the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia and other immigrants' rights organizations.

May 2011 – St. Vincent de Paul community affirms its membership in the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia as coalition.

An affirmation of membership in the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia coalition of faith communities may be found on the reverse page.