

January 11, 2012

On Wednesday January 11<sup>th</sup>, as we remember our day of fast and prayer, we are invited to **“see with the eyes of God and with women’s hearts, the distress of millions of immigrants and displaced persons, of children and women victims of human trafficking seeking a more human life.”** (Chapter Document, 2007)

### ***Legalization for the Undocumented***

*(one of three parts)*

- **Legalization would keep families together and improve the well-being of U.S.-citizen children.**

Legalization would help stabilize immigrant families and would protect U.S.-citizen children in “mixed” status families. A 2009 study by the Pew Hispanic Center found that 47 percent of unauthorized immigrant households were couples with children. 3.1 million U.S.- citizen children live with one or more undocumented parents. Undocumented immigrants are more likely than either U.S. born residents or legal immigrants to live in a household with children, a growing share of whom—73 percent—are U.S.-born citizens.

- **Legalization would recognize and maintain the economic contributions of the undocumented.**

Undocumented workers are an integral part of many industries across the country, including agriculture, service, construction, meat packing, and poultry processing. For example, undocumented workers make up more than 13 percent of the labor force in agriculture, and 25 percent of the labor force in farming. Of the roughly 8.3 million undocumented workers in the U.S. labor force, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that more than 1 million are in manufacturing, 1.7 million in construction, 1.4 million in the leisure and hospitality industries, and over 300,000 in agriculture. In addition, undocumented workers contribute billions to the tax and Social Security systems, paying \$520 billion into the Social Security system since 1975.