

## **Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable Statement Regarding Refugees**

The Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable was originally founded in the spirit of the 2002 Winter Olympic Games, which is to build a peaceful and better world without discrimination of any kind, in a spirit of friendship, solidarity and fair play. Our members are committed to embody that spirit.

As such, our Roundtable members are concerned while watching the heartbreaking plight of our refugee families. The violence and terror they have, and continue to experience, is unfathomable and our faith and moral underpinnings tell us we need to help them.

We acknowledge the dangerous world in which we live and the complexity of the immigration issue, and we know our elected officials are working hard to protect us. However, as a people of faith, we know we are better than this. All sacred texts guide and teach us to express ourselves in a peaceful manner and to address people in a way that prompts understanding and consciousness. Based on these texts, people of faith have an obligation to protect the downtrodden and defenseless and always stand for justice on every level, and express it for the goodwill of humanity. We feel the need to manifest our faith through good works, to bring the refugees to a new home where they will be safe, welcomed and protected.

As stated by Governor Gary Herbert “Utah has always been a very welcoming state for refugees and for immigrants. We appreciate the diversity they bring and certainly they are part of the fabric of our state.” As the Roundtable, we support all other faith organizations reaching out in support of refugees and immigrants. To reiterate the words of Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, the Catholic Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle, we need “to work to promote humane policies that protect refugees and immigrants’ inherent dignity, keep families together, and honor and respect the laws of this country.”

The United States uses a very thorough, multi-year vetting process with refugees. We need to have faith in that system and in a Higher Power that will inspire us to vigilance in knowing how to protect ourselves while we protect the vulnerable.

The journey ahead will never be easy; however, if we come together with our common values and share them for the betterment of humanity, we will not only empower and protect refugees, but humanity as a whole. Let us always remember what the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. said: “The ultimate measure of a *woman or a man* is not where s/he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where s/he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”