



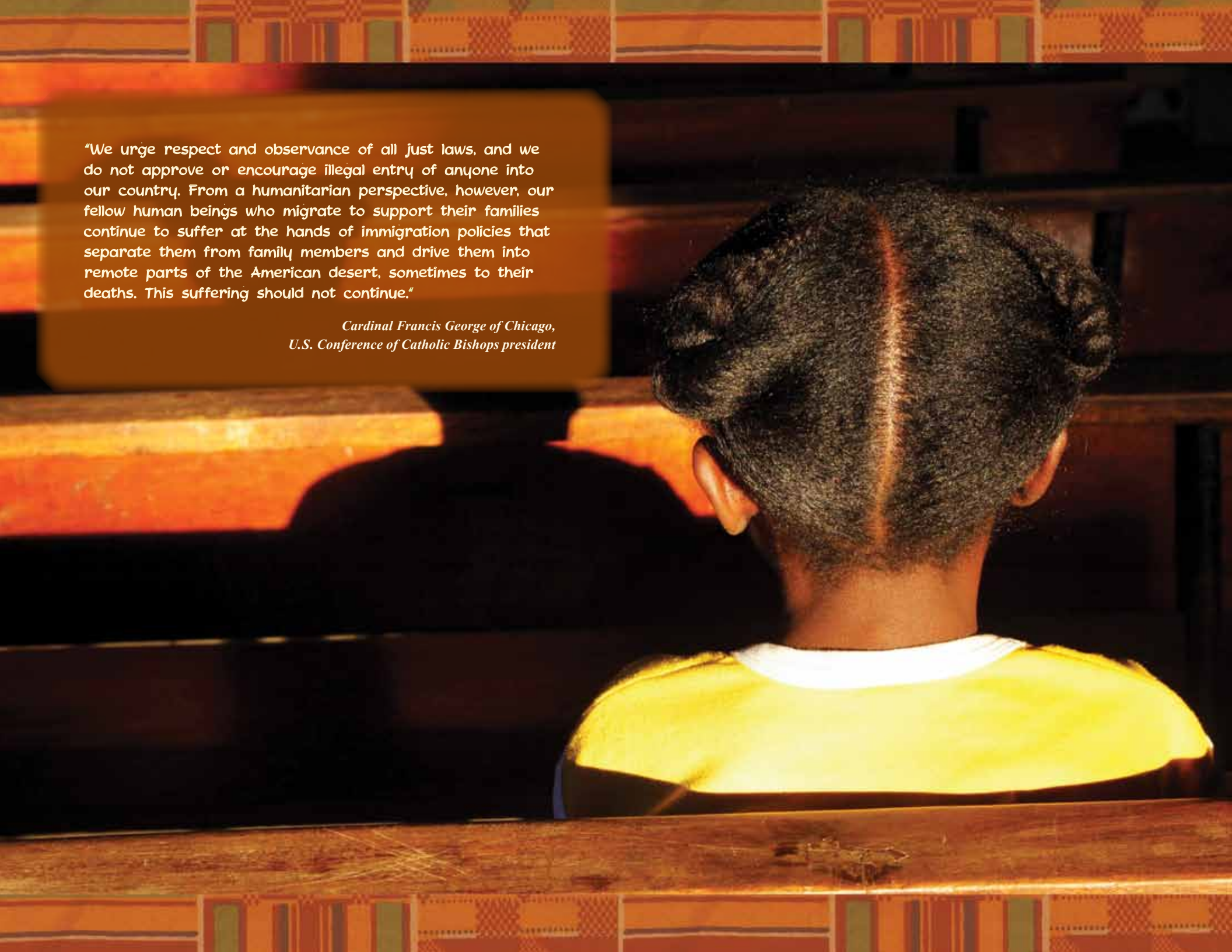
2009

Annual Report

Renewing Hope,
Seeking Justice



Migration and Refugee Services
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



"We urge respect and observance of all just laws, and we do not approve or encourage illegal entry of anyone into our country. From a humanitarian perspective, however, our fellow human beings who migrate to support their families continue to suffer at the hands of immigration policies that separate them from family members and drive them into remote parts of the American desert, sometimes to their deaths. This suffering should not continue."

*Cardinal Francis George of Chicago,
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops president*

Dear Friends,

In 2009, with much of the world experiencing economic recession, Migration and Refugee Services stepped up to help an unprecedented number of refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers and others who entered our country under various provisions of United States law. For more than 22,000 new arrivals, MRS was the welcoming face of the Catholic Church in the United States.

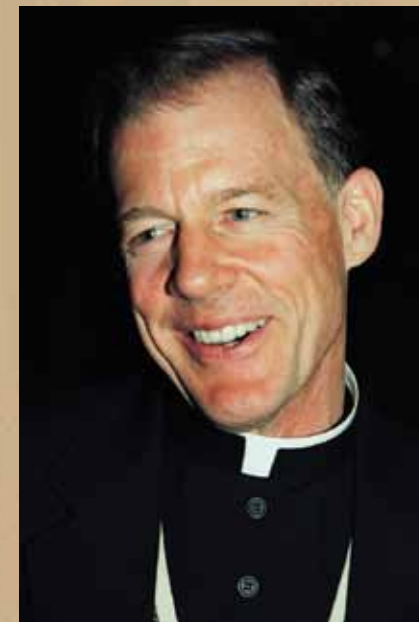
Every day, MRS helps newcomers and their families navigate the complex path to safety and success in their adopted country. And while no two years are ever the same at MRS, we build on our keen experience and the professionalism of our staff and local and diocesan partners to help us meet the new and familiar challenges we face.

This year, even as MRS brought new hope to thousands of people, we worked behind the scenes to expand our capacity to serve the most vulnerable. We completed an internal reorganization to respond to an ever-changing environment and we strengthened our refugee resettlement programs in dioceses with growing needs.

MRS reflects the commitment of the U.S. Bishops to justice and dignity for all people. In 2009, we continued to speak out vigorously in support of comprehensive immigration reform as a compassionate, lawful approach to current and future immigrants.

With 2009 barely over, a tremendous earthquake ravaged Haiti. MRS, a long-time advocate for that country's impoverished people, prepared to comfort and welcome the survivors as they arrive in our country. For Haitians already in the U.S. as guest workers, MRS sought an extension of their visas, so they could support their families as they rebuild their lives and homes.

I am humbled by the work that MRS does in the name of all Catholics and I am grateful for your ongoing support and encouragement of this Gospel-mandated effort.



Sincerely yours in Christ,
Most Reverend John C. Wester
Bishop of Salt Lake City
Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration

Our Mission

Migration and Refugee Services carries out the commitment of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to serve and advocate for refugees, asylees, and other forced migrants, immigrants, and other people on the move. Special concern is given to the most vulnerable among these populations, such as, but not limited to, minors unaccompanied by parents or adult guardians and the victims of human trafficking. This commitment is rooted in the Gospel mandate that every person is to be welcomed by the disciple as if he or she were Christ Himself and in the right of every human being to pursue, without constraint, the call to holiness.

Migration and Refugee Services contributes to this commitment by:

- ⦿ Assisting the bishops in the development and advocacy of policy positions at the national and international levels that address the needs and conditions of these populations.
- ⦿ Engaging in educational efforts designed to influence public, particularly Catholic, attitudes toward these populations and to create a welcoming and supportive Church in the United States.
- ⦿ Anticipating, providing, and arranging critical services to these populations in collaboration with government, Catholic partners, and other allied organizations.



Resettlement Services

Since 1975, MRS has offered hope and help to nearly one million refugees seeking a safer life in the United States. It is the largest resettlement agency in the country and accomplishes its mission through a long-standing partnership with a network of more than 100 resettlement agencies, most of them Church-related. MRS government funding partners include the United States Departments of State, Homeland Security and Health & Human Services.

MRS resettles close to one-third of all the refugees who enter the United States each year. In 2009, MRS helped 22,514 new arrivals from 44 different countries begin the next chapter of their lives. The largest numbers of refugees came from Iraq, Burma, Bhutan, Cuba, Somalia and Eritrea.

Behind the impressive numbers are myriad tales of courage, fear, determination and relief. Each individual and family arrives with a unique story. MRS honors their different experiences with a range of services that respects the rich diversity of their cultures and a keen understanding of their needs.

As the sponsoring resettlement agency, MRS is responsible for coordinating the services each refugee needs to become an established and productive member of his or her new community. MRS relies primarily on local Catholic Charities agencies, parishes and community groups to met the basic needs of refugees and match them with appropriate housing,

"I want to encourage you and your communities to continue to welcome the immigrants who join your ranks today, to share their joys and hopes, to support them in their sorrows and trials, and to help them flourish in their new home."

*Pope Benedict XVI
to Bishops of the United States
National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception
Wednesday, 16 April 2008*



furnishings, employment opportunities and community services. With financial aid from government and private donors, MRS helps provide the basic necessities newcomers need in their early days in their adopted country.

In 2009, MRS responded to the federal government's urgent request that national resettlement agencies and their local networks shoulder more financial responsibility for refugees by increasing program capacity and resettling more people than initially anticipated. This yeoman effort was especially challenging in the face of the economic crisis that diminished housing and employment opportunities throughout the country.

Following 9/11 there was a notable decline in the number of refugees resettled into the United States. However, there has been a steady increase in refugee admissions to the United States since 2002, when only 27,113 refugees were admitted. In 2009, 74,654 newcomers came. In that period, MRS increased both the number of people it serves and the percent of the arrivals. In 2009, MRS resettled 30 percent of refugees, compared to 24 percent in 2002. MRS expects to identify new resettlement sites in the coming year to help meet the growing demand for its capable assistance.

Coming to America: One Refugee Family's Story

One year after their resettlement by Catholic Charities in Phoenix, Bhutanese refugees Khagendra and Ganga Baral are economically self-sufficient and helping other new arrivals navigate the path to independence in their adopted country. Their harrowing and circuitous path to Arizona resonates with other refugees.

Khagendra and 21 members of his extended family fled Bhutan in South Asia in 1991 when he was 17 years old. His father was imprisoned for promoting equal rights and the family was harassed by the government. After a brief period in India, Khagendra spent the next 17 years in a refugee camp in Nepal. The conditions there were basic, at best. Although safe, the Bhutanese were frustrated by their statelessness and the lack of job opportunities.

Khagendra became one of the few teachers in the camp and was allowed to study in Nepal and India for a degree in marketing. Ganga, a fellow refugee and longtime resident of the camp, earned a degree in business management in Nepal. They married in 2001, welcomed a baby daughter, Swechya, to their family, and were accepted for resettlement in the United States in 2007.

The Barals were with the first group of Bhutanese arrivals in Phoenix. As the most highly educated in the group, they helped their sponsors organize a cultural training presentation for fellow refugees. Their program was so successful, they helped the newcomers introduce themselves and their traditions to other residents of Phoenix.

Khagendra is now a case worker for Catholic Charities and Ganga works for Lutheran Social Services. As employees and volunteers, the Barals are using their rich experience to benefit both their sponsors and fellow refugees.



Special Program for Cubans and Haitians

MRS is also a well-recognized, historic leader in helping Cubans and Haitians who resettle in the United States under unique and complex immigration policies. MRS is one of only two agencies that help resettle Cuban and Haitian entrants. In 2009, the MRS team in Miami welcomed 11,064 Cubans and Haitians.

Some 10,169 Cubans participated in the Parolee Orientation Program that allows sponsored individuals to live and work in the US. Some parolees are winners of a visa lottery. Others were reuniting with family members in this country. MRS helped parolees with orientation, health screening and documentation for employment.

MRS administers the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program, whose goal is to help the participants integrate into their new communities and become financially self-sufficient. In 2009, MRS resettled 895 Cuban clients including rafters and boat arrivals, visa lottery winners with no sponsors in the US, people who crossed into the US along the Mexican border and Cuban Medical Personnel Parolees and their families serving in missions in third countries. In addition, the MRS Miami office helped reunite 15 Haitian and 5 Cuban unaccompanied minors with relatives, families or friends.

Three Cuban musicians resettled by Catholic Charities in Phoenix through the Cuban/Haitian Entrant Program, are already using their considerable talents to help others.

Nalinde Rodriguez Valle, Miguel Pena Rodriguez and Ederlis Perez Hernandez, his wife, comprised a famous musical group, Migue Y Su Leyenda. As internationally recognized entertainers, they performed Cuban salsa, meringue and rhumba for audiences in Mexico, Thailand, Italy, Greece and Spain.

When they came to the United States hoping for a better life, Catholic Charities of Phoenix provided basic needs and helped them get established in their new community. They have headlined in local clubs, private parties and restaurants and will be featured performers at a Catholic Charities appreciation dinner in June, 2010.



“Children are an exceptionally vulnerable population that are easily taken advantage of, exploited and abused. This is particularly true when they are undocumented and unaccompanied in a foreign country and, all too often, with nobody to turn to for help.”

*Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City,
Chairman of USCCB Committee on Migration*



Children's Services

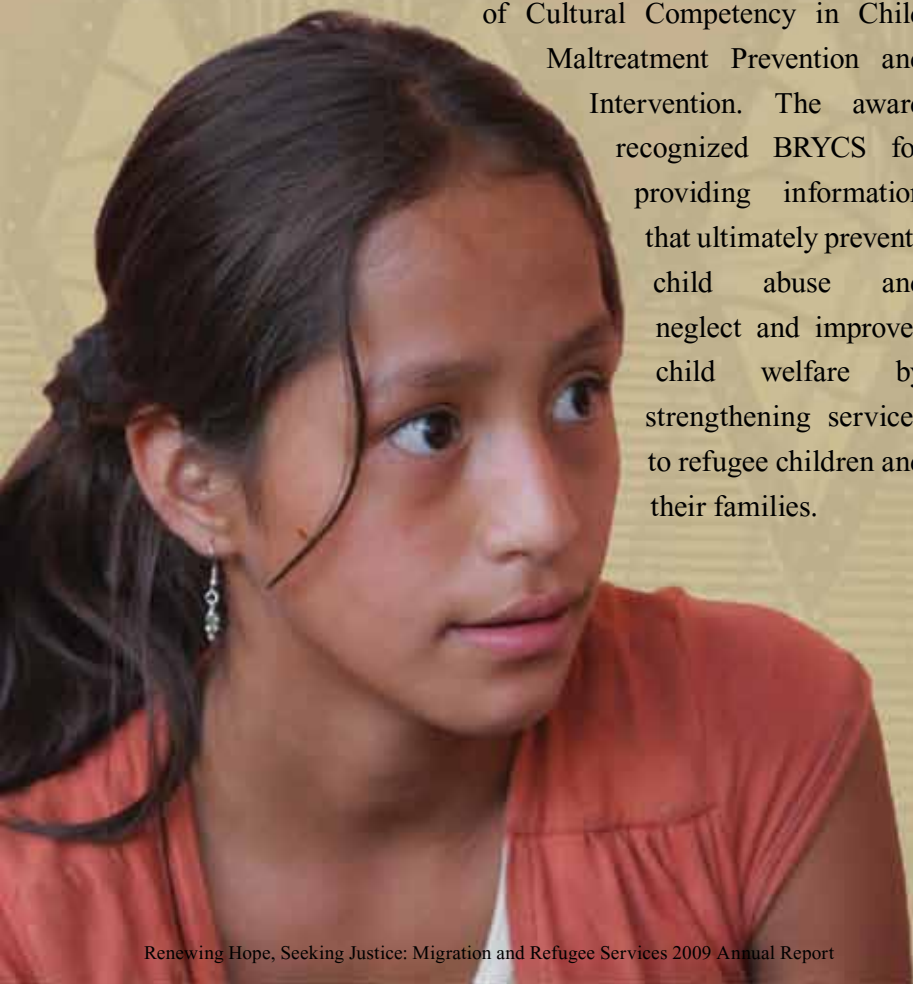
Children under age 18 who are resettled alone in the United States, without a parent or guardian able to care for them, are known as Unaccompanied Refugee Minors. Their reasons for coming to the U.S. are as varied as the countries from which they hail. Some are trafficking victims, others come through refugee and transit camps, some are abandoned or abused, still others are asylees. All are vulnerable.

Because of its historic success in serving the needs of vulnerable children, MRS is one of two national agencies that resettles unaccompanied refugee children. The MRS programs for unaccompanied refugee minors place these children into foster care settings and ensure that their unique needs are met. The stable environment gives the children protection and a sense of security. In 2009, MRS helped 165 unaccompanied refugee children who arrived in the United States from 22 countries.

MRS also resettles unaccompanied, undocumented children referred by the U.S. government. Many of these youths are trying to reunite with family members already in this country and some are trying to work to send money home to siblings and other relatives. MRS works through the countrywide network of Catholic dioceses to provide critical case management services for these children and their families. In 2009, MRS helped 268 children in 60 cities with home study and follow-up services. These included safety and trafficking assessments, verification of sponsors' residential and financial stability, help enrolling in schools, finding pro bono attorneys, referrals to affordable medical services, community orientation and assistance with immigration appointments.

Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) is a MRS program with a nine-year track record of providing technical assistance to refugee resettlement groups and other organizations working with newly arrived children and families throughout the country. BRYCS's services strengthen refugee families and increase access to effective support programs. Its Web-based information clearinghouse and training resources promote the cultural competence of public service agencies that work with refugee children.

In 2009, BRYCS was honored by the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children with an award for Advancement of Cultural Competency in Child Maltreatment Prevention and Intervention. The award recognized BRYCS for providing information that ultimately prevents child abuse and neglect and improves child welfare by strengthening services to refugee children and their families.



Anna left rural Honduras as a young teen with the goal of making enough money working in the US to supplement her mother's meager income and feed her siblings back home. Sadly, her intended sponsor was unable to care for her when she arrived in Virginia. Through the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program, MRS placed her with a supportive foster family that was also hosting another young woman from Honduras. With help from skilled, compassionate staff at MRS partner agencies, Anna addressed the anxiety she felt about being unable to send money home. MRS introduced her to a pro bono attorney who helped her apply for legal permanent residency.

Anna struggled with an eating disorder and ultimately channeled her efforts to learn about proper nutrition, cook for herself and be in charge of her healthy lifestyle. Although she arrived in the US with only a modest command of English, she quickly became fluent. Anna concentrated on her schoolwork, was elected to the National Honor Society and graduated from high school at age 16. While this is an outstanding achievement for any teen, it is extraordinary for someone whose young life was marked by such significant upheaval and dislocation.

Anna has completed her first year of community college. She hopes to earn her degree and pursue a career in either business or psychology. She also dreams of reuniting with her family.

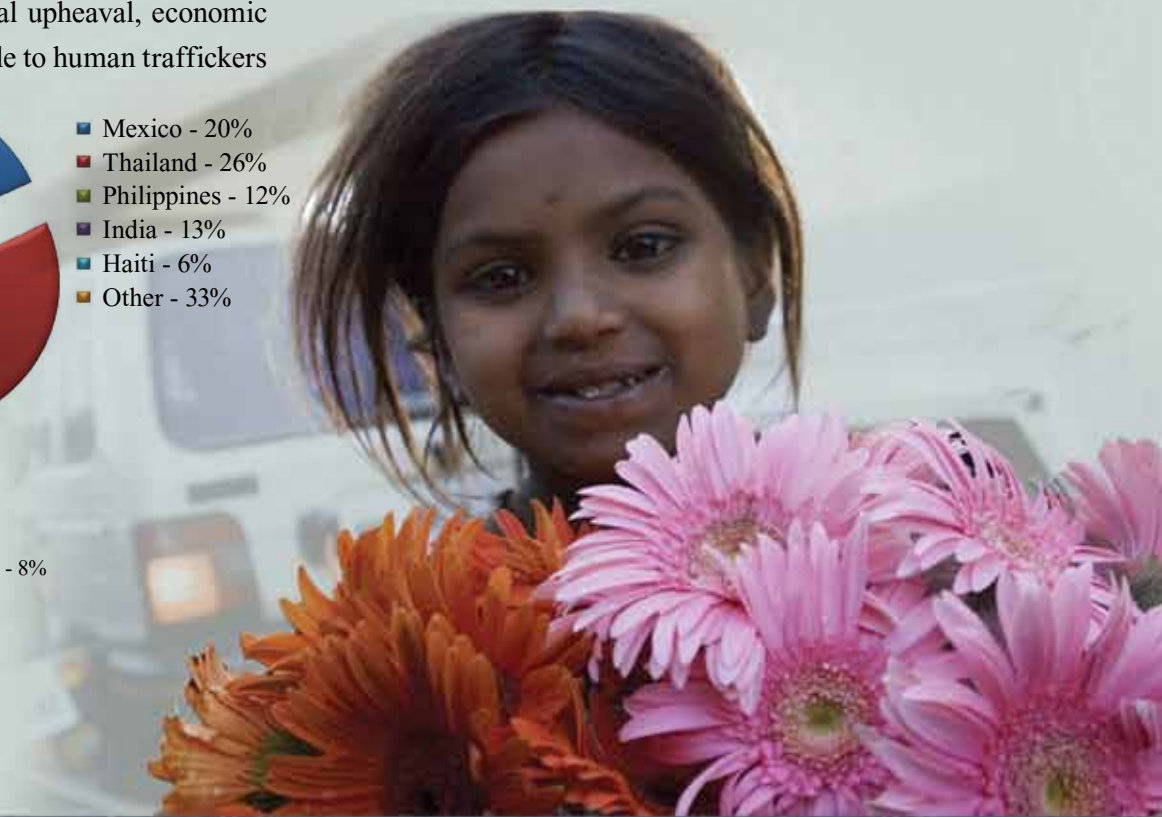
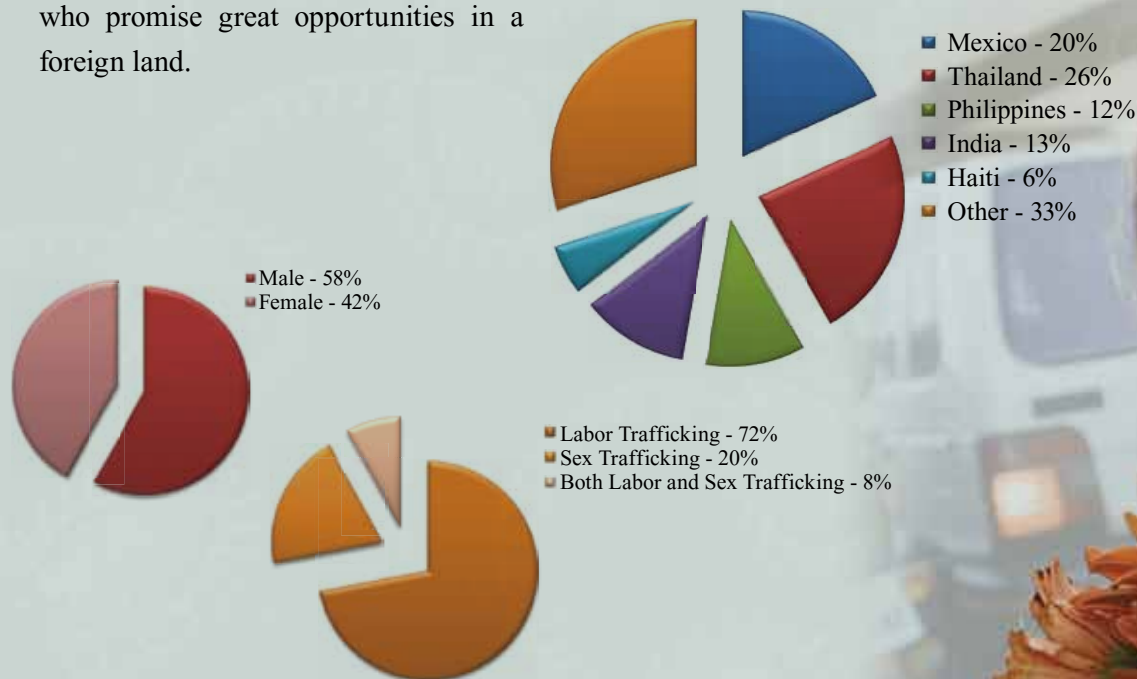
Human Trafficking Victim Services

The US Department of State estimates that as many as 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year to work in the sex trade or as slave labor. They are men, women and children from Asia, Europe, Central America, Mexico and other regions who are lured with the false promises of employment, education, a better life and even romance that bears little resemblance to what they are ultimately forced to do. While trafficking is a problem that affects foreign nationals, it also impacts American citizens and legal permanent residents. Regardless of their place of birth, all victims of trafficking ought to be given protection and support as they attempt to heal and start a new life.

There is no prototypical trafficking victim, but those who fall prey are generally impoverished, marginalized, poorly educated people who lack basic protections and opportunities. Their desperation to escape natural disaster, political upheaval, economic destabilization or other oppressive conditions makes them vulnerable to human traffickers who promise great opportunities in a foreign land.

“Human trafficking is a horrific crime that destroys lives. Women and children have been forced into prostitution and child trafficking rings, while men, women and children have been forced into different types of manual labor, without pay or protection.”

*Anastasia K. Brown,
MRS Director of Resettlement Services,
in testimony before a subcommittee of the
House Homeland Security Committee*



Through its network of 109 local service organizations in 43 states and two US territories helped 858 trafficking victims and their families in 2009. The vulnerable individuals came from 56 countries, with the largest number of survivors from India, Mexico, Thailand, Philippines and Haiti. They had been found trafficked into forced labor or commercial sex on farms, in factories, in private homes, in brothels, and other industries.

The Anti-Trafficking Services Program ensures that survivors needs are met holistically through comprehensive case management.. Under a contract with the U.S. government and in coordination with local social service organizations throughout the country, MRS provides coordination, training, per-capita funding and monitoring to subcontractors who have the expertise to give survivors of trafficking the specialized assistance their cases require.

One of the greatest challenge to helping trafficking victims is identifying them. Fear, trauma, differences in language, distrust of authorities, lack of resources and understanding of rights prevent most victims from self-identifying. Lack of understanding and awareness about human trafficking among the general public and others who may come into contact with victims also means that most go unidentified.

To help educate the American Catholic community and the general public about the crime of human trafficking and the Church's teaching and work on the issue, MRS is launching a national human trafficking awareness campaign inspired by On Human Trafficking, a 2007 statement from the USCCB Committee on Migration. In addition, MRS convenes the Coalition of Catholic Organizations Against Human Trafficking, which brings together national and international groups working to eliminate trafficking through public education, advocacy and direct services.

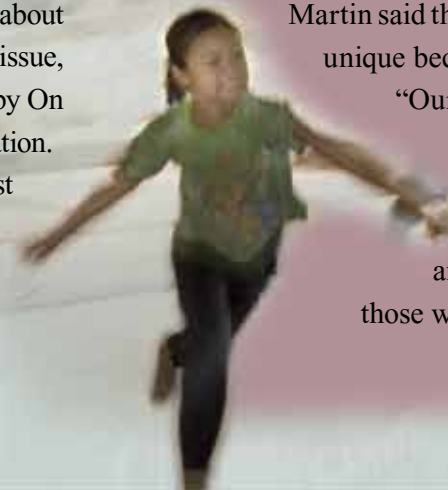
In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, workers from across the country and around the globe were drawn to the devastated city of New Orleans with the promise of jobs in demolition and reconstruction. Human traffickers exploited the eagerness and desperation of foreign workers, luring them with false pledges of steady wages and permanent residency status.

MRS was alerted to the plight of hundreds of stranded laborers. It responded by helping its local partner, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, develop its capacity to aid victims of trafficking.

Martin Gutierrez, director of neighborhood and Community Services for Catholic Charities, said his staff was well-versed in case management, but had never dealt with survivors of human trafficking. MRS provided training and support. "In a few short weeks, we went from not having an anti-trafficking program to serving more than 50 people. We could not have done it without the guidance of MRS," he said.

Martin said the approach of MRS and its local partners is unique because of the commitment of its employees.

"Our faith drives what we do and that's an important component. The Church has been providing service to immigrants and refugees for two thousand years and that inspires a level of trust, even from those who are not Catholic," he said.





Migration Policy & Public Affairs

As citizens and as leaders of the Catholic Church, the U.S. Bishops exercise their duty to speak out on behalf of marginalized people who suffer injustice. In 2009, MRS staff and bishops associated with the USCCB Committee on Migration advocated for the rights of immigrants in testimony to Congress and in letters and visits to policy-makers.

MRS advocacy is based on Catholic social teaching, which has a proud tradition of defending the right to migrate. The same teaching holds that migrants have the right not to migrate – in other words, to be able to find work in their own home countries so they can support their families in dignity.

MRS supports comprehensive immigration reform. In testimony before the U.S. Senate, Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Archbishop emeritus of Washington, DC, said, “The Church position in favor of reform seeks to restore the rule of law and provide order and legality to an otherwise chaotic system. Our nation requires an immigration system that marries legal immigration with our long-term economic needs, the principle of family unity, and basic human rights.”

Working together with the USCCB Office of Government Relations, MRS pushed for increased government funding for programs that serve refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, victims of human trafficking and unaccompanied children. The tangible result was an increase in the appropriation for the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 2009, MRS urged that refugee admissions more closely reflect the global need, which averaged 100,000 people before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. MRS has been a strong advocate over the intervening years for a return to this more generous refugee admissions policy. It also called for increased federal funding for refugee reception, placement and resettlement.

MRS regularly seeks assistance for uniquely needy and neglected populations, particularly those who have no other durable alternatives. In 2009, those groups included Zimbabweans, Burmese Rohingya, Iraqis, Colombians, unaccompanied refugee minors and trafficking victims.

Recognizing that dioceses and religious orders rely heavily on foreign-born priests and religious to fill shortages and to serve an increasingly diverse Catholic laity, MRS successfully urged Congress to reauthorize the Special Immigrant Non-Minister Religious Worker Visa Program. This allows religious denominations to sponsor foreign workers to fill positions in underserved religious vocations and occupations.

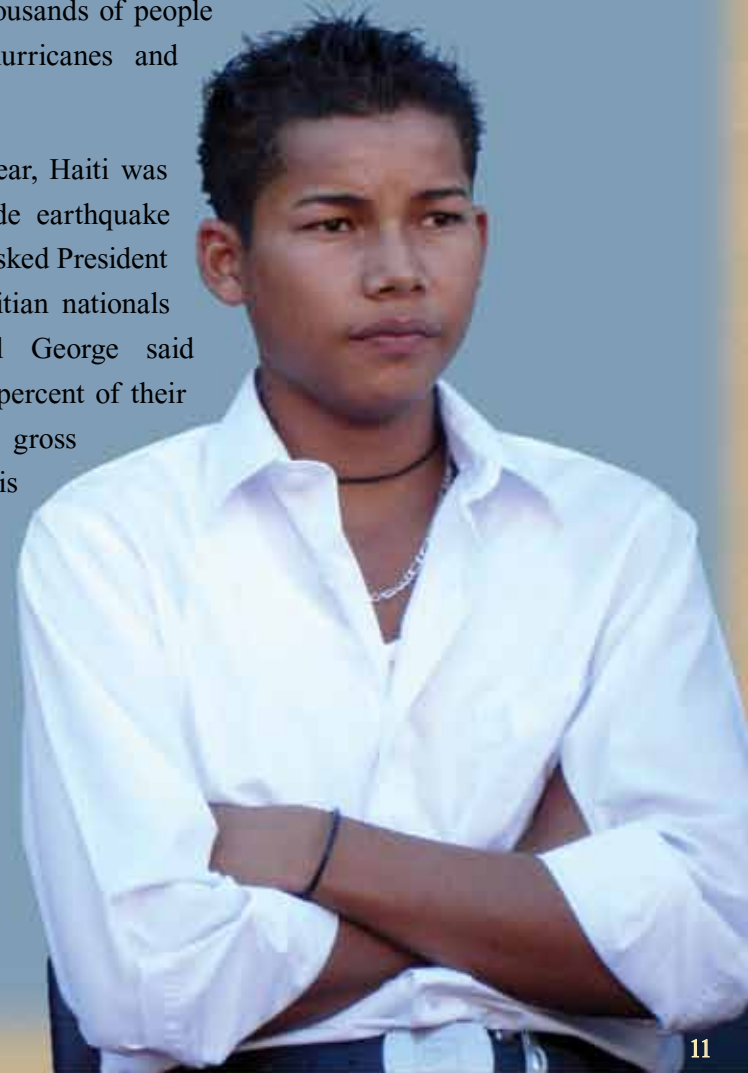
"It is our view that the American public, including the Catholic and other faith communities, wants a humane and comprehensive solution to the problems which beset our immigration system, and they want Congress to address this issue."

*Bishop John C. Wester of Salt Lake City,
Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration*



In March 2009, MRS asked President Barack Obama to give Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to Haiti. This would enable Haitians to live and work legally in the United States for eighteen months and send remittances home to help their country recover from natural disasters that caused food shortages and political unrest. At the time the request was made by Cardinal Francis George, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, tens of thousands of people were displaced by four hurricanes and tropical storms.

Twelve days into the new year, Haiti was wracked by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake and Cardinal George again asked President Obama to offer TPS to Haitian nationals in this country. Cardinal George said Haitians abroad provide 35 percent of their impoverished country's gross domestic product. He said, "It is critical that this life-blood of the fragile Haitian economy be sustained, especially at this critical time." His special plea was heard as the Obama Administration authorized TPS for Haitians until January 15, 2010.



Justice For Immigrants

Since 2005, MRS has led a broad coalition of Catholic organizations in a campaign for immigration reform called Justice for Immigrants. The campaign has four primary objectives: to educate the public, especially the Catholic community, including Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants; to create political will for positive immigration reform; to enact legislative and administrative reforms based on the principles articulated by the bishops; and to organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

The Justice for Immigrants campaign reflects five specific immigration reform goals articulated by the USCCB Bishops' Committee on Migration:

- Bring the undocumented population in this country out of the shadows and give them a chance, over time, to achieve permanent residency and citizenship
- Preserve family unity by strengthening family-based immigration
- Create legal avenues for migration, so that migrant workers, who labor in many important industries in our nation are able to enter the country legally and in a safe and orderly fashion
- Give immigrants their day in court consistent with American values, by restoring due process protections that were removed in 1996 legislation
- Work with neighboring countries and the international community to address the root causes of migration, such as economic inequalities, so that immigrants and their families can remain in their home countries and support their families in dignity.

In 2009, the Justice for Immigrants campaign held convenings in Ohio, Colorado, Pennsylvania and Texas to gather and train immigration reform supporters whose faith drives their work. Participants included more than 300 representatives of dioceses, parishes and social service agencies. The sessions drew people across state lines to reinforce their understanding of the Church's position on immigration and review educational pieces for engaging discussion and action in their home areas.

Work was completed on an updated website, www.JusticeForImmigrants.org and a nationwide postcard initiative was developed for launch January 1, 2010. Some 1.5 million postcards were readied and an electronic version was accessible through the website. Both efforts underscore the Catholic Church's broad based commitment to thoughtful, comprehensive immigration reform.



Financial Statement

Migration and Refugee Services secures grants and contracts from the U.S. government to carry out its critical work in support of vulnerable newcomers. It also receives vital funding from the Catholic Relief Services collections held in parishes nationwide. These monies are used to meet the service needs of immigrants, refugees, migrants and other people seeking safety and freedom.

MRS is also grateful for foundation grants and private contributions in support of our unique mission.



REVENUE

Government Grants and Contracts	\$ 58,025,605
CRS Collection	1,313,343
Collection Fees on Refugee Travel Loans	2,204,488
Investment Income	186,234
Private Grants and Contributions	280,465
Other	36,296
Total Revenue	\$ 62,046,430

EXPENSES

Personnel	\$ 7,659,611
Operating Costs	5,045,141
Diocesan Programs & Direct Assistance to Refugees & Other Clients	45,789,042
MRS Grants and Donations	159,748
Total Expenses	\$ 58,653,542

Revenues in Excess of Expenses **\$ 3,392,888**

These represent unaudited figures of the MRS financial statement. These financials are in the process of being audited by an independent accounting firm and upon completion will be made available on the USCCB web site at www.usccb.org/finance.

National Migration Week

“Comprehensive immigration reform remains a priority for the Catholic Church”

*Johnny Young,
Executive Director, Migration and Refugee Services*



For close to 30 years, National Migration Week has been an annual observance of the US Catholic Bishops to recognize the important contributions and rich diversity that immigrants, refugees and asylum-seekers bring to the communities where they have settled. In 2009, it was celebrated January 4-10, following the feast of the Epiphany.

With the overall theme *Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice*, 2009 National Migration Week focused attention on comprehensive immigration reform as the most practical, humane and effective solution to the problem of illegal immigration in the United States.

Posters, information kits, bulletin announcements and a “Scriptural Rosary” prayer guide were sent to a; Catholic parishes and schools throughout the country. The educational and spiritual resources urge Catholics to fulfill their obligation to bring hope to marginalized people and seek justice for those who are vulnerable to exploitation.

National Migration Week supports other year-round MRS initiatives including the Justice for Immigrants campaign (www.JusticeForImmigrants.org). Downloadable materials from current and former National Migration Weeks are accessible at www.usccb.org/mrs/nmw.shtml.

Artwork created by unaccompanied minors cared for by the volunteers with Catholic Charities with the support of Migration Refugee Services.



“Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity which should be respected.”

From “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” a joint statement from the Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States.

Zimbabwe & South Africa Trip

Because of its long history of humanitarian service to refugees and others arriving to the US from every region of the globe, MRS is acutely aware of the many trouble spots that create refugee movements and prospects for the long-term, indefinite displacement of persons with little hope of return to their countries of origin. Each year, MRS and the USCCB Committee on Migration conduct fact-finding mission trips to shed light on such areas of instability and upheaval and seek durable solutions to the plight of refugees caught up in these horrible conditions of hopelessness and despair.

A delegation of bishops and MRS staff visited Zimbabwe and South Africa from August 26 to September 7, 2009 to collect firsthand information on the situation of Zimbabwean refugees and displaced

persons in both countries. The trip drew special attention to the trafficking of men, women and children for use as modern-day slave laborers and sex workers.

Three members of the USCCB Subcommittee on Africa made the trip. They were Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, retired Archbishop of Washington, Bishop John Ricard of Pensacola, Florida and Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Zimbabwe was torn by violence in the wake of a disputed presidential election in April, 2008, exacerbating tensions already at work in the country. Some six million Zimbabweans fled the country, half of them to South Africa. The Zimbabwean economy collapsed and the people who remained were crushed by hyperinflation and 95 percent unemployment.

When the delegation arrived in the region, the Zimbabwean economy had stabilized somewhat. South Africa, the most developed nation in Africa and long a haven for refugees, was ill-equipped to handle the influx from Zimbabwe. The newcomers experienced mass deportations, xenophobic harassment and competition for employment

and scarce resources. The South African government refused to give refugee status to 80 percent of the Zimbabweans, characterizing them as economic, not political refugees.

The MRS delegation found that many of the Zimbabweans in South Africa had valid refugee claims. They noted that vulnerable groups, such as unaccompanied children and women heads-of-household were at great risk and required protection and resettlement. They also found that refugees were susceptible to exploitation because they received inadequate food, shelter, health care and transportation.

Participants heard reports of women kidnapped by human traffickers and refugees diverted at the border to work as forced labor on local farms without pay or access to their documents.

Returning home, the delegation urged the United Nations and the governments of South Africa and the United States to engage the Zimbabwe refugee situation more vigorously and to provide them with protection and durable solutions.



Catholic Social Teaching On Migration

Catholic social teaching provides the foundation on which the Church addresses issues related to migration. Reflecting on both Scripture and Church tradition, the bishops developed a set of moral principles to inform the decision-making process of policy-makers as they address legislation related to these issues. The Church recognizes that there has to be a careful balance between the rights of migrants to move due to economic necessity and the rights of sovereign states to govern their borders. Particularly vulnerable populations, such as unaccompanied children should be given special attention and care.

In 2003, the bishops of US and Mexico issued a pastoral letter to provide points of reflection for all Catholics to use as they consider the issues surrounding illegal immigration, migrants, refugees and other people on the move. The five basic principles articulated in *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope* are:

- Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.
- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.
- Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
- The human dignity and human rights of all migrants should be respected.

Definitions

While each person is respected as an individual, it is helpful for governments and organizations to categorize groups of people on the move to make sure their specific situations are addressed. These terms are used by MRS:

Refugees are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who meet the United Nations' criteria of having a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Migrants are individuals who are living in a country that is not their country of origin, for whatever reason.

Asylees are people who flee their country due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group. Although asylees are refugees, asylees who come to the U.S. for protection do not enter the country with refugee status. They must apply for asylum, a status that allows them to remain in the country and receive services.

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery that consists of the illegal trade of human beings through force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor.



USCCB Committee On Migration

Chairman:

Most Reverend John Wester
Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez, Chair Elect

Membership:

His Eminence Edward Cardinal Egan
Most Reverend Michael Burbidge
Most Reverend Charles Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Most Reverend Felipe de Jesus Estevez
Most Reverend Richard Garcia
Most Reverend John Manz
Most Reverend Jaime Soto
Most Reverend James Tamayo

Photos courtesy of:

All photos courtesy of Catholic Relief Services
with the exception of:

Kay Chernush, for the US State Department,
pages 8-9.

MRS participants of the 2009 delegation trip,
page 15.

JFI postcard campaign designed by Cynthia
Rouillard, page 12.

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Beth Griffin

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Cynthia Rouillard, Storm Graphic Arts

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His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick
His Eminence Sean Cardinal O'Malley
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Most Reverend Edgar Da Cunha
Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio
Most Reverend Kevin Farrell
Most Reverend Martin Holley
Most Reverend Gerald Kicanas
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