



**SISTERS**  
OF THE PRESENTATION  
*of the Blessed Virgin Mary*



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*Stand Together*  
*and spend yourselves for the poor*

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**FEBRUARY 2007**

## **REFUGEES**

There are an estimated 100,000 Iraqis leaving their country each month, including many of the best-educated professionals. Approximately two million have fled since the 2003 US led invasion. Neighboring countries are feeling the burden of Iraqi with Syria taking 800,000 Iraqis; Jordan 700,000; Egypt 100,000; Iran 54, 000 and Lebanon 20,000. In addition, tens of thousands of Iraqis are internally displaced. The US State Immigration Policy can approve 500 Iraqi refugees yearly.

### **Connections:**

Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful. (Earth Charter, #3)

Ensure economic activities and institutions at all levels; promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner. (Earth Charter, #10)

Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace. (Earth Charter, #16)

### **Reflection:**

The Iraqis are among the many refugees seeking temporary relief and permanent resettlement. This desire has been reflected in our own history as Americans. When we reflect back upon the evolution of American women's religious congregations, we "mirrored" immigrant Catholicism in the US. From the first foundation around 1727, the number of women religious grew exponentially. By 1900, there were more than 40,000 women religious. These origins reflected the larger picture of American Catholicism as an immigrant community. American immigrants were faced with supporting themselves, learning English and coping with adaptations to life and apostolic work in the world.

What culture(s) do I see women religious "mirroring" today? What qualities and skills do we have / do we need to acquire for "mirroring" those most vulnerable in our global world today? What might all this suggest about our hopes/actions as we prepare for chapter in December? Please feel free to comment on the internal Dubuque Presentation message board.

### **Actions:**

1. In light of the above reflections, who are the "immigrants" and "refugees" of today? What types of hospitality are shared in my relationship with them?
2. The US is spending more than \$8 billion / month to wage war with Iraq. The State Department spends millions/year to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of refugees. Yet growing unemployment,

poverty and various forms of discrimination and increasingly limited access to basic services prevent most Iraqi civilians from realizing their economic, social and cultural rights.

Contact Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice at: 202.647.4000  
and Ellen Sauerbrey (Asst. Secretary for Population, Refugees and Migration) at: 202.647.7360.

Inform them of the urgent humanitarian needs of the **Iraqi refugees**. Urge them to respond to refugees who have fled Iraq and that US policy must reflect concern for people of Iraq with a greater effort at opening our doors to these refugees.

3. This month President Bush is expected to submit a “**supplemental**” **funding request** to continue the war in Iraq. The estimated request will be around \$100 billion. Contact your Senators and Representative and urge them to vote against this “supplemental” spending request. It is clear that most people in the US oppose this war and this money does not meet the requirements for “supplemental” or emergency requests. This war is several years old and money should be placed in the yearly Presidential budget.

4. The **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** issued a statement last week on Climate Change. One of the consequences of melting ice and increase in water level will be **environmental refugees**. Drought will also pressure individuals in need of water and food to become environmental refugees. For over forty years, Israel and Palestine have fought over water sources (see article entitled, *Breaching borders: The role of water in the Middle East conflict* at <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/water/2006/10roleofwater.htm>)