



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brussels, 13 October 2025

Pax Christi International is pleased to announce that [Bishop Mark Seitz](#), together with his team at **Diocese of El Paso**, is the recipient of the **2025 Pax Christi International Peace Award**.

**Bishop Mark Seitz** of the Catholic Diocese of El Paso, Texas, has been, over the past ten years, a passionate advocate for migrants and their families along the United States–Mexico border. More recently, in his role as Chair of the Migration Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), he has also been a courageous defender of immigrants and their families who are being cruelly and unjustly persecuted by the current administration in the United States.

His prophetic pastoral letters, his denunciation of the separation of migrant children from their families and of the deaths of six detained migrant children, his protection of this vulnerable population, the opening of diocesan facilities and parishes as shelters, and his leadership among the bishops in upholding Catholic Social Teaching and the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger, even in the face of persecution of both immigrants and those who come to their aid, are truly extraordinary.

Bishop Seitz has made it clear that the commitment of the Catholic Church in the United States is to defend and protect immigrants, and to highlight the values and contributions that immigrants bring to our country, beginning with their deep faith: *“There is a prophetic dimension to this work... Our solidarity must be visible... The way of love cannot be hidden under a bushel basket. It must be embodied, incarnate and public”*.

In a later address, Bishop Seitz added:

*“For this reason, the Church is persecuted”*.

For 2025, three organisations will also receive **Special Recognitions**. Like the Diocese of El Paso, the three awardees work along the United States–Mexico border and are committed to defending the rights of migrants, thereby confronting the restrictive policies of the United States administration: the [Annunciation House](#) and its Executive Director and Founder Ruben Garcia, the [Hope Border Institute](#) and its Executive Director Dylan Corbet, and the [Las Américas Immigrant Advocacy Center](#) and its Executive Director Marisa Limón Garz.

The award ceremony will take place during **Pax Christi International’s World Gathering**, the conference celebrating the 80th anniversary of the movement, which will be held in **Florence, Italy, from 5 to 9 November**.

**Annunciation House** is a shelter for migrants and their families in El Paso, founded more than forty years ago by Rubén García during a visit to the border by Mother Teresa who was present at the founding and blessed the endeavor. During the past forty years, several hundred thousand migrants have been welcomed and given shelter by a multicultural staff and volunteers, before moving on to reunite with their families throughout the United States. Annunciation House has been targeted by the State of Texas and threatened with prosecution to close its doors to migrants. Bishop Seitz has vigorously defended Annunciation House as a witness to the Gospel mandate to welcome the stranger.

**Hope Border Institute**, its director Dylan Corbett, and its multicultural staff have been close advisors to Bishop Seitz, and strong advocates for the rights of migrants, advising the diocese on the root causes of migration, and promoting the pastoral teachings of Bishop Seitz and the diocese, including his two pastoral letters, [Sorrow and Mourning Flee Away](#) (2017), and [Night Will Be No More](#) (2019), which was issued following the massacre of 22 people of immigrant origin at a local shopping center, targeted by a white racist individual. Hope Border has published numerous materials documenting the plight and the reasons why people migrate to the U.S. – Mexico border, as well as a biweekly online resource Frontera Dispatch.

**Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center**, its Executive Director Marisa Limon Garza, and its multicultural staff have helped thousands of migrants and their families file for asylum in the United States. Marisa Limon was the former Deputy Director of Hope Border Institute before being named Executive Director of Las Americas in 2022. Since its founding in 1987 as an offshoot of Annunciation House, Las Americas has served over 50,000 persons from over seventy-seven countries, while advocating for a robust asylum system, working to reunify separated families, and advocating for systemic change to U.S. immigration policy and practices. It recently joined other organizations in filing a lawsuit that successfully overturned a Texas immigration law that would have deputized state law enforcement to arrest and deport undocumented immigrants.

The peacebuilding action of Bishop Seitz and of the organisations working in the area cannot be fully understood without the broader context of a global phenomenon which, according to a 2024 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), affects nearly 125 million people. Forced displacement, often leading to forced migration, has doubled in the past decade, and the number continues to grow each year due to the impact of violence and war, climate change, and food insecurity.

For many decades, the U.S.–Mexico border has been a place of dramatic encounter, set within the context of an exponential increase in global migration. The drama of migration and forced displacement, and the dangers faced along the journey, are further aggravated by systemic racism, violence against Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples, and the destruction of the environment they inhabit in the places they are forced to leave behind.

Today, the Diocese of El Paso, recipient of the 2025 Pax Christi International Peace Award, offers a remarkable example of inspiring witness in the protection and defence of migrants and their families, within a context marked by violence and policies that have often targeted representatives of the Catholic Church and other churches for their mission of universal welcome.

On this matter, on Tuesday 8 October, Pope Leo XIV also spoke out. In a private meeting with Bishop Seitz, he expressed his closeness to the migrants suffering from the fear of mass deportations at the border with the United States.

*Established in 1988, the Pax Christi International Peace Award is funded by the Cardinal Bernardus Alfrink Peace Fund and honours contemporary individuals and organisations who make a stand for peace, justice and nonviolence in different parts of the world.*

---

For more information, contact:

Martha Inés Romero, Pax Christi International  
[m.romero@paxchristi.net](mailto:m.romero@paxchristi.net)