



Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate United States Province

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After consulting with several Oblates who do ministry in the Rio Grande Valley, I make the following statement on behalf of the United States Province of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate:

One hundred sixty-nine years ago, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, immigrants themselves, first set foot in South Texas. We have been ministering as Catholic Priests and Brothers in this region almost as long as Texas has been a part of the United States. From our earliest days, La Lomita has been a sacred place to us and to those whom we serve, regardless of one's country of origin. It has been and remains a true place of "sanctuary" in every sense of that term - a place for safety, respite and worship, accessible to all, giving peace and security in human and spiritual form. To divide this site with a border wall would destroy what this place has been, and continues to be, for Catholics and others on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border.

As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, we stand with Bishop Daniel Flores and the Diocese of Brownsville, asking that this sacred site not be divided by any wall. We firmly believe that this wall, in this location, is a major step in the wrong direction for people on both sides of the border. Our 169 years of ministry here convince us that its conception is rooted in prejudice, fear and misunderstanding toward those who seek residency or asylum. No mere border, however fortified, can begin to address the varied reasons why people take enormous risks and make incredible personal sacrifices to seek an appropriate and dignified life for themselves and their families.

Citizens of all nations involved deserve real solutions to the complex problems of immigration, asylum, and the conditions that spur people to choose these paths. No citizens deserve these solutions more than those whose lives, families, communities and faith will be compromised by such a wall in the Rio Grande Valley. This wall is not such a solution, at La Lomita or anywhere.

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