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**Press Release**

**For Immediate Release
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**ABQ Faith Communities, Immigrant Families, and Elected Officials Hold Solidarity Vigil with Local Women Walking 100 Miles in Pilgrimage to the Pope**
***Week-long Walk Will Echo Pope’s Message of Dignity for Migrants Ahead of Meeting with President and Congress***

Albuquerque- faith leaders, immigrant families, and elected officials will hold an interfaith procession and vigil in Albuquerque’s Barelas neighborhood in order to denounce the anti-immigrant sentiment currently dominating the current political debate on immigration and highlight the contributions of immigrants, and to echo the Pope’s message for migrant dignity.

The interfaith vigil will also serve as a send-off  for four Albuquerque women who will join the Women’s Pilgrimage for Migrant Justice, a 100 mile march in which 100 women, mainly domestic workers, will walk from the York County Detention Center in Pennsylvania to Washington, DC where Pope Francis is to meet with the President and address Congress. Amongst other issues, the Pope will address immigration and the pilgrimage is inspired by his call to “respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation in such a such a way as to make the conditions for migrants more humane.”

“I am walking with 100 Women so that we can lift up the courage and collective power of our communities, explains Placida Cortez, a member of El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos, “I am a proud worker, mother, grandmother, and student. It is time for the debate to return to how we are going to fix the broken immigration system so that our families don’t continue to be torn apart and workers are treated with the dignity and respect that we all deserve as human beings.”

Father Vince from St Therese of the Infant Jesue Catholic Parish will speak to the shared values, regardless of ones religious beliefs, that Pope Francis’ position on immigration reflects, “We can all stand with Pope Francis on calling us to turn from intolerance and join forces to promote a culture of encounter, respect, and understanding.  This means an end to unjust deportations and detention, protecting family unity through legislation that welcomes migrants into full participation in our society."

 State Representative Javier Martinez sees the Pope's visit as an opportunity to shift the debate on immigration to better reflect the values of his constituents, “The recent attacks on Latino and Asian communities are attacks on our nation’s values, on our children and neighbors, and on the fastest growing populations of the U.S. electorate. The attacks are un-American and will not stand. United, against this xenophobia, we can and will do better. I am proud that I represent many communities in New Mexico that instead of embracing this anti-immigrant sentiment, represent the rising tide of acceptance, the desire to fully integrate our immigrant communities, and to pass comprehensive immigration reform.”