



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Office of the Archbishop Emeritus

April 8, 2016

Gulf Coast Leadership Council
The Metropolitan Organization
4141 Southwest Fwy., Suite #650
Houston, TX 77027

Dear TMO and Texas IAF Leaders,

I remember well the early days of IAF inspired organizing the faith communities in Houston to address serious civic problems which adversely affected certain areas of the city and the human lives of its citizens. Lead by Ernie Cortez, The Metropolitan Organization and Gulf Coast Leadership Council, came into existence and for 40+ years have greatly improved the lives of the poor and the immigrants among us. It is a happy moment for me to congratulate all who have, in any way, participated in making human life more just and equitable in Houston due to the outstanding efforts of TMO/GCLC.

The following are only some of the achievements of the past 40 years:

- Leveraging millions of dollars for basic services for our families, such as improving flood prone areas, reducing crime in our neighborhoods;
- Passing legislation to address the health care needs of the poorest of the poor;
- Working to pass immigration reform and working against anti-immigration legislation;
- Helping thousands of young adults move out of poverty and into careers with family wages because of your vision in creating and supporting Capital IDEA-Houston;
- Protecting the dignity of workers in the public sector by fighting for living wages.

TMO/GCLC has transformed leaders by teaching them how to organize on behalf of their communities and act on their faith. All people of good will can and should see the importance of cultivating a community that is concerned about the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized, and work to make the conditions of all people more in keeping with the dignity that comes from being made human.

In this Holy Year of Mercy, it is evident that the work of TMO/GCLC and the Texas IAF Organizations are supporting the Church's mission to be a witness of compassion by putting faith into action.

I congratulate you on 40+ years of organizing in Texas while I also recognize a need for the continuation of the organizing efforts of the Industrial Areas Foundation to develop leaders who can effectively address the injustices affecting our families.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza
Archbishop Emeritus of Galveston-Houston

JAF/baf