[Name of your MP]

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

Dear [name of your MP]

I am writing to you as a concerned Catholic constituent to express my profound concern about the Government’s proposed Illegal Migration Bill. This Bill, if passed, will not only deny people fleeing war and persecution their right to seek safety in the UK and apply for asylum, but will punish them, based on how they came here, not whether they need protection. This would amount to an asylum ban.

The Bill would:

* Remove the right to seek refugee protection in the UK for those who arrive irregularly.
* Breach the UN Refugee Convention, of which the UK is a founding signatory.
* Fail to provide the safe routes we need now.
* Leave thousands of men, women and children in limbo, detained and denied a fair hearing.

On 14 March, the Department for International Affairs of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, published *Love the Stranger: A Catholic Response to Migrants and Refugees*. This document sets out a number of key principles, including:

* The dignity of the human person at the root of our response to migrants and refugees.
* The right of a state to control its borders, but not based on economic factors alone: we have a responsibility to the wider world.
* Avoiding the use of immigration detention, arbitrary expulsion and other practices which violate human dignity.
* The need to fulfil our obligations under international frameworks protecting migrants and refugees, such as the Refugee Convention.

We encourage you to engage with your Catholic constituents and our bishops’ document to help to clarify why the teaching of the Catholic Church is incompatible with this Bill.

We call on you to:

* Protect rather than punish refugees by defending their fundamental right to seek asylum.
* Stand up for the UN Refugee Convention and our country’s history as a founding signatory.
* Ensure the government provides alternatives to dangerous journeys, including safe routes.
* Insist on an effective asylum system which is just and compassionate, gives people a fair hearing and reduces the backlog in a fair manner.

We strongly urge the government to reconsider this Bill and instead pursue more humane and workable policy solutions which respect the dignity and rights of migrating people.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing your views on this urgent matter.

Your sincerely,