



Office of the Archbishop
835 North Rush Street
Chicago, IL 60611-2030
312.534.8230
archchicago.org

July 4, 2019

Dear Brothers in Christ,

I write to you again to express my support as we stand together in solidarity with many of our parishioners who were deeply troubled by government actions related to refugees and immigrants. Despite our repeated calls through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for a comprehensive and compassionate reform of our broken immigration system, our voices and our prayers have gone unanswered.

Moreover, conditions at the U.S. Mexico border have continued to deteriorate with daily reports of the overcrowded and inhumane conditions to which our brothers and sisters – and particularly children – are being subjected. To compound the situation, the President has recently announced that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids will occur in U.S. cities sometime after the July 4th holiday, “unless we do something miraculous.” We have also learned that the expected ICE raids will target not only people with deportation orders, but also any undocumented person.

Threats of broad enforcement actions by ICE are meant to terrorize communities, adding to the suffering of thousands of children and families. Reforming our immigration system must be accomplished in a bipartisan effort that keeps the dignity of all persons at the forefront of decision making. It is simply immoral to use human beings as bargaining chips in negotiations and sweeping raids as inducements to capitulation.

I reaffirm that the Archdiocese of Chicago supports the dignity of all persons without regard to immigration status. Standing together, however, does not imply that we stand idly by and simply watch as fear grips the most vulnerable in our society, pushing them further into the shadows.

To that end, in coordination with the USCCB and other organizations, we have developed educational resources on the legal options available to immigrants. Links to these materials, available in both English and Spanish, accompany this letter. I ask that you review these resources and share them with your parishioners through your bulletins or other direct forms of communication.



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Many of our parishes are already providing pastoral accompaniment, legal information and educational resources for immigrant families and individuals across Chicagoland through the Immigration Ministry of the Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity: <https://pvm.archchicago.org/human-dignity-solidarity/immigration-ministry/about-us>. If you would like this assistance for your parish, please contact Miguel Salazar, our Senior Coordinator for Local Immigration Ministry, at msalazar@archchicago.org or 312-534-8509.

As a reminder, we have not named our churches as “sanctuaries” solely because it would be irresponsible to create false hope that we can protect people from law-enforcement actions, however unjust or inhumane we may view them to be. Moreover, immigration law does impose criminal penalties and fines on anyone who conceals, harbors or shields from detection, in any place, an alien who has entered or remains in the United States in violation of the law.

Per Archdiocesan policy, only those who are ordained and assigned to live in a rectory or another ecclesiastical facility may reside there. Specifically, this means that written permission of the Archbishop or the Vicar General is needed for those not assigned there.

Before you allow immigration officials entry to parish premises, please ask for identification, the reason for the visit, and any documents pertaining their need to enter, such as a warrant. If they have a warrant from ICE, please ask them politely for the opportunity to review the warrant and to contact legal counsel for the Archdiocese of Chicago, before they enter and contact the Office of Legal Services immediately, (Olga Rojas at 312-534-8332). If they do not want to wait, have someone contact the Office of Legal Services while you cooperate with the government official. If they do not have a warrant and it is not a situation where someone is in imminent danger, tell them politely they cannot come on the premises, ask them for their contact information, and tell them to contact the Office of Legal Services. You should then contact Legal Services to report this interaction.

Please know we will continue to provide services, such as food, shelter and legal aid through our related organizations, including Catholic Charities, regardless of a person’s national origin, religion or immigration status. For more information on Catholic Charities services, visit: <http://www.catholiccharities.net>.

Once again, you should never hesitate to reach out to our Office of Legal Services (Olga Rojas at 312-534-8332) if you have any questions. Additionally, Rebekah Azar Rashidfarokhi from Chicago Volunteer Legal Services has offered to host community presentations and/or



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legal clinics in our parishes. If you are interested, please contact Ms. Rashidfarokhi at 312-332-7399. You can also refer your parishioners to Catholic Charities Legal Assistance Department, at 312-948-6821, for individual safety plan assistance.

Next week, the Archdiocese of Chicago is hosting representatives from 13 Catholic U.S. dioceses at the *Instituto Pastoral Migratoria* July 10-14, 2019 at the Catholic Theological Union. Members of the archdiocese's *Pastoral Migratoria* will train diocesan, pastoral and lay leaders on how to start their own ministry with the goal of forming a nationwide network of Catholic, parish-based immigration ministries. Please pray for the participants and the success of this important program.

Join me in also extending prayers to those who have been directly affected by our government's unfortunate actions, as well as to those living in fear who may fall victim to indiscriminate enforcement activities.

Please accept my personal thanks for all you do with and for your parishioners during these emotionally trying times. Please be supportive of one another and know that I stand with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Archbishop of Chicago

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