

Statement from the U.S. Catholic Bishops on Immigration
November Meeting 2025

As pastors, we the bishops of the United States are bound to our people by ties of communion and compassion in Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are disturbed when we see among our people a climate of fear and anxiety around questions of profiling and immigration enforcement. We are saddened by the state of contemporary debate and the vilification of immigrants. We are concerned about the conditions in detention centers and the lack of access to pastoral care. We lament that some immigrants in the United States have arbitrarily lost their legal status. We are troubled by threats against the sanctity of houses of worship and the special nature of hospitals and schools. We are grieved when we meet parents who fear being detained when taking their children to school and when we try to console family members who have already been separated from their loved ones.

Despite obstacles and prejudices, generations of immigrants have made enormous contributions to the well-being of our nation. We as Catholic bishops love our country and pray for its peace and prosperity. For this very reason, we feel compelled now in this environment to raise our voices in defense of God-given human dignity.

Catholic teaching exhorts nations to recognize the fundamental dignity of all persons, including immigrants. We bishops advocate for a meaningful reform of our nation's immigration laws and procedures. Human dignity and national security are not in conflict. Both are possible if people of good will work together.

We recognize that nations have a responsibility to regulate their borders and establish a just and orderly immigration system for the sake of the common good. Without such processes, immigrants face the risk of trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Safe and legal pathways serve as an antidote to such risks.

The Church's teaching rests on the foundational concern for the human person, as created in the image and likeness of God (*Genesis* 1:27). As pastors, we look to Sacred Scripture and the example of the Lord Himself, where we find the wisdom of God's compassion. The priority of the Lord, as the Prophets remind us, is for those who are most vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the stranger (*Zechariah* 7:10). In the Lord Jesus, we see the One who became poor for our sake (*2 Corinthians* 8:9), we see the Good Samaritan who lifts us from the dust (*Luke* 10:30–37), and we see the One who is found in the least of these (*Matthew* 25). The Church's concern for neighbor and our concern here for immigrants is a response to the Lord's command to love as He has loved us (*John* 13:34).

To our immigrant brothers and sisters, we stand with you in your suffering, since, when one member suffers, all suffer (*cf. 1 Cor.* 12:26). You are not alone!

We note with gratitude that so many of our clergy, consecrated religious, and lay faithful already accompany and assist immigrants in meeting their basic human needs. We urge all people of goodwill to continue and expand such efforts.

We oppose the indiscriminate mass deportation of people. We pray for an end to dehumanizing rhetoric and violence, whether directed at immigrants or at law enforcement. We pray that the Lord may guide the leaders of our nation, and we are grateful for past and present opportunities to dialogue with public and elected officials. In this dialogue, we will continue to advocate for meaningful immigration reform.

*As disciples of the Lord, we remain men and women of hope,
and hope does not disappoint! (cf. Romans 5:5)*

*May the mantle of Our Lady of Guadalupe enfold us all in her maternal
and loving care and draw us ever closer to the heart of Christ.*

Migration & Catholic Social Teaching

Key Principles Derived from the Magisterial Teaching of the Catholic Church

- Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland (i.e., the right not to migrate).
- When the conditions necessary for a dignified life are absent, persons have the natural right to migrate to support themselves and their family.
- More prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome those in search of the security and means of livelihood unavailable in their country of origin.
- Countries have the right to maintain their borders and regulate immigration, consistent with the common good and with respect for the sanctity of human life.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
- The God-given dignity and rights of undocumented immigrants should be respected.
- Immigrants have a responsibility to respect the country that receives them.

Irregular Migration and Immigration Enforcement

- Pope Francis has stated that “safe, orderly, regular, and sustainable migration is in the interest of all countries.” At the same time, Catholic teaching recognizes that it “is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop.” Threats to human life, therefore, may compel irregular migration. Above all, we must reject an oversimplification of the issue that disregards the human lives involved. One of the main differences between immigrating to the United States today and immigrating to the United States 100 years ago is that the process has become much more complicated and limiting, meaning most who immigrated during the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries could not do so today.
- Immigration enforcement should always be targeted, proportionate, and humane. According to its nature (i.e., the crossing of international boundaries) and the U.S. Constitution, it is principally and necessarily the responsibility of the federal government to regulate immigration and provide orderly processes for people seeking to immigrate to the United States. However, national, state, and local governments must work collaboratively with one another and civil society to devise a collective and humane response to migration.



Immigration Reform

- As recognized by the Church for decades, the current immigration system is inadequate to address the needs of American families, employers, and communities, as well as immigrants themselves. Reforms and investments are needed to modernize/increase capacity at ports of entry, increase the number of/access to lawful immigration pathways, and establish earned legalization programs for long-time undocumented residents.
- The situation at the U.S.-Mexico border is unsustainable for migrants and communities alike, but it can and should be addressed without sacrificing longstanding, life-saving humanitarian protections, such as asylum. Ultimately, no sustainable reduction in migration can be achieved without a long-term commitment to addressing its root causes. Looking only at the U.S.-Mexico border or the domestic situation ignores the realities people face in their countries of origin. Heavy-handed enforcement measures will not alleviate forced migration. Much more attention should be given to the myriad causes of increased migration, rather than simply responding to its symptoms. As Pope Francis has [acknowledged](#), “Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided; this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development.”

Additional Resources

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2241](#) (USCCB).
- [Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](#) (USCCB)
- [Q&A on Catholic Ministries Serving Migrants and Refugees](#) (USCCB)
- [Human Trafficking, U.S. Policy, and the Catholic Church](#) (USCCB)
- [Justice for Immigrants](#) (USCCB)
- [Responding to Migrants and Refugees: Twenty Action Points](#) (Holy See)
- [Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#) (Holy See)
- [And They Shall Know Us by Our Love](#) (Catholic Charities USA)
- [Modern Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration: Notable Quotes](#) (CLINIC)

