



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings and prayerful best wishes at the beginning of a new year, which brings with it the hope of peace and prosperity for all.

Unfortunately, however, these are increasingly divisive and disturbing times for our country and our world. Those who live on the margins of society are frightened. In particular, our immigrant brothers and sisters find themselves challenged and facing an uncertain future. The key question in a moment like this is, "Who are we?" We must remind ourselves of the fundamental importance of our being, recognizing that who we are can offer a counterpoint to what the world around us has become.

All of humanity possesses a dignity given to us as God's creation. Each of us, no matter our race, language, or creed, has been created in God's image and likeness. Only with this conviction of our sacred and shared identity as God's sons and daughters can we hope to boldly proclaim the possibility of peace amidst the uproar of these distressing times.

As Christians, we profess a God who entered into our humanity and lived amidst the challenges of this world – as a refugee child fleeing his homeland, as an itinerant preacher without a home and dependent on others' kindness, and as a misunderstood minister who was deemed a criminal and faced persecution and death on a cross. The life of Jesus challenges us to consider how we treat those who are refugees, those who are seeking a home, and those who are unjustly deemed criminals.

Since its founding, this nation has been a refuge for those fleeing war, poverty, and persecution elsewhere in the world. "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," our Statue of Liberty proclaims. Throughout its history, our nation has strived to recognize the dignity of human life and to care for the common good of our society.

The Church, forming its members as faithful citizens of this nation, affirms the importance of laws that secure the safety and security of all who call this nation home. As such, the U.S. Catholic bishops recognize that a nation must have control of its borders and establish orderly processes for immigration. However, our immigration laws, legal processes, and systems must recognize and respect the God-given dignity of every person and serve to help us be one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

The blanket criminalization of migrants, together with the indiscriminate mass deportation of people, places our nation in crisis and does not serve the common good. For decades, the U.S. Catholic bishops have called for legislators to set aside partisan differences and work together toward the reform of our immigration laws. This call has greater urgency today. The common good demands

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more than simply discarding policies of the past. It calls for thoughtful plans that promote fairness in the immigration system as well as protect and strengthen our communities.

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has become a home to many families seeking to escape poverty, violence, and persecution in their home countries. Families from Haiti, Venezuela, and elsewhere have been welcomed and have begun to contribute to their new home. Springfield, for example, has faced remarkable challenges in recent years, yet it has also created a promising future for itself by productively integrating migrant newcomers into its workforce, communities, churches, and schools. Mass deportation jeopardizes the unity of families and the stability of communities that have worked hard to integrate their new members.

Along with my brother bishops, your pastors, and other Church leaders, I offer you my support and spiritual closeness as you navigate the way forward. May we never grow weary in our efforts to end the dehumanizing and demonizing rhetoric that seeks to overtake us. May we treat each other with the dignity and respect, mercy and compassion due our brothers and sisters. And may God bless us with the discipline to strive tirelessly to bring about justice for all.

Profoundly grateful for all those who advance the principles of life, dignity, and the common good, I join with all people of goodwill in a commitment to continued prayer and action that promotes peace and seeks prosperity for all.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Robert G. Casey
Archbishop of Cincinnati

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