

WHAT IS NEEDED FROM THE CHURCH TODAY?

Consistent and steadfast participation by Church leaders:

- By engaging with political representatives and other government officials, bishops have an opportunity to influence public policy, while also encouraging consideration for the human dimensions of immigration.
- Countering anti-immigrant rhetoric, which has grown in recent years, demonstrates the Church's commitment to a consistent life ethic and a witness to the God-given dignity of every human person.

Enhanced catechesis and responsive preaching:

- Reevaluate how Catholics are taught about migration in school, seminaries, and parish settings and implement curriculum and other pedagogical methods conducive to forming Catholics so that they are more attuned to Church teaching on this subject.
- Approach the Church's teaching on migration in a more holistic fashion and avoid the tendency to compartmentalize it as a standalone issue. Bringing attention to the fact that the Church's moral teaching on this issue is embedded in a much broader moral framework that encompasses a range of issues in the economic, political, and social spheres might help to de-politicize migration.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office of Human Dignity and Solidarity
Immigration Ministry
Cardinal Meyer Center
3525 South Lake Park Avenue
Chicago, IL 60653

JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS

For more information visit the Justice for Immigrants page at justiceforimmigrants.org or you can contact them at JFI@usccb.org.

To learn more, visit us at catholicsandimmigrants.org or at facebook.com/office.for.immigrant.affairs.

Pastoral Migratoria invites and forms immigrants to be leaders of service, accompaniment and justice actions in their parish communities.

Raymundo Valdez

rvaldez@archchicago.org | 312.534.8503

Rosalba Ascencio

rascencio@archchicago.org | 312.534.8029

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Pastoral Migratoria Nacional

IMMIGRATION REFORM AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



IMMIGRATION REFORM AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

For decades, the Catholic Church in the United States has called for immigration reform, elevating the importance of family unity and human dignity, among other considerations. The bishops have frequently been at the forefront of these efforts. Unfortunately, immigration reform has fallen victim to a growing partisan divide. Meanwhile, millions of undocumented immigrants and their families remain vulnerable while waiting for a permanent political solution—in many cases, for decades. Given this, the Church's consistent moral voice is essential for providing direction and promoting positive change. Ultimately, it is necessary to work toward a comprehensive legislative reform of our immigration laws, but securing permanent legal status for long-term residents is a vital step.



WHAT SHOULD COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM DO?

In advocating for immigration reform, the USCCB has consistently upheld that changes to the U.S. immigration system should:

Ensure access to permanent legal status and a pathway to citizenship for current residents.

Given the millions of undocumented persons already living in the United States, legalization is a crucial part of any reform. At a minimum, this should include Dreamers, Temporary Protected Status (TPS)/Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) holders, migrant agricultural workers, and other undocumented essential workers.

Reaffirm and prioritize family unity and reunification.

Any reform of the U.S. immigration system should strengthen families and maintain the long-standing emphasis on family unity. Such family-focused policies include: (1) measures that establish legal pathways and waivers that enable families to maintain unity or restore it for those families already torn apart; (2) removal of the three- and ten-year bars to lawful immigration; (3) utilizing prior, unused family-based immigration visas; and (4) mechanisms that will clear current backlogs and ensure timely family reunification.

Promote access to asylum and due process.

Immigration reform legislation should limit policies that place undue burdens on asylum and instead establish reasonable and achievable pathways to citizenship for refugees and asylum seekers. To facilitate this, universal access to legal assistance should be made available.

Reform the immigration detention system.

Immigration reform legislation should eliminate the use of detention as a method of deterrence, end the use of for-profit corporations in immigration detention, reserve detention only for individuals who are national security or public safety threats, and expand and prioritize community-based alternatives to detention, which are proven to ensure immigration compliance in a more humane way.

Evaluate and revise immigration enforcement strategies, both along the U.S.-Mexico border and within the interior, to ensure the just and humane treatment of all migrants.

Border management should reflect broader U.S. economic and humanitarian interests and prioritize the well-being of local communities. This requires a prohibition on the use of military resources and personnel along the border, as well as the separation of local policing from interior enforcement. Additionally, reform legislation should require the identification and protection of vulnerable populations, such as children, as part of any interior enforcement strategy.

Incorporate policies and actions that address the root causes of migration.

Political and religious persecution, environmental degradation, and economic under development and exclusion have long been factors driving people to leave their homelands. Truly comprehensive and effective immigration reform cannot occur without including policies that will mitigate the drivers of irregular migration and promote interventions that allow people to thrive in their homeland.