

An Offense Against God

Over Memorial Day weekend, a man who worked on a farm in our diocese and who was active in his local Catholic parish was taking his children on an outing to a state park. A park officer pulled him over. Why? It's not clear. Maybe a broken tail light? Maybe because he looked Latino? The park officer eventually called U.S. Immigration, and the farmworker was taken away in handcuffs in front of his family and put into immigration detention. It's likely he will be deported, taken away from his wife and four young children. Those who know him say he is a diligent worker and a devoted father and husband. He performed work which few U.S.-born people will do, in New York State's biggest economic sector, agriculture. **Are we better off now that he is locked up?**

Another young Catholic immigrant in our diocese was held in the Batavia immigration detention center for over two years while his request for political asylum was pending. He had been beaten so badly by one of the factions in the political unrest in his home country that his injuries still cause him pain. Advocates were able to get him released from detention, finding him a lawyer and host families who opened their homes to him, but his asylum case is still not decided. He isn't permitted to work so he volunteers at a soup kitchen and at a public library and studies hard in English classes. **Will we all feel safer if our government ships him back to Africa?**

“what is happening to the immigrant family in the United States is an offense against God and the human conscience.”

-Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio

For years the Catholic Church in the United States has joined many other people of good faith to call for comprehensive immigration reform. The U.S. Senate passed legislation last year but the House of Representatives has failed to act on this issue, and **time is running out. We must act now.**

Without immigration reform, families will continue to get torn apart by detention.

Without immigration reform, husbands and wives, parents and children will continue to wait for years, even decades, to be reunited with family members who've immigrated to this country.

Without immigration reform, immigrant workers will be more easily exploited and abused, and young immigrants will be unable to access the higher education that would enable them to live up to their potential.

Without immigration reform, people will continue to die in the desert crossing the border into this country.

PLEASE CALL YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TODAY to ask for support of comprehensive immigration reform during this legislative session.

House members representing districts within our diocese:

Rep. Chris Collins
202-225-5265

Rep. Dan Maffei
202-225-3701

Rep. Tom Reed
202-225-3161

Rep. Louise Slaughter
202-225-3615

If you don't know who your representative is, go to

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/>

CONTINUE TO TAKE ACTION– we can't give up the struggle!

-Go to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops "Justice for Immigrants" web page where you'll find an electronic postcard to your representative to fill out and send

http://capwiz.com/justiceforimmigrants/issues/alert/?alertid=62312721&queueid=%5bcapwiz:queue_id%5d

-Send that link around via email and social media

-Call Speaker John Boehner at 202 225-6205; ask him to "Move immigration reform legislation to the House floor."

-Ask your pastor to talk about immigration reform in his homily and to include prayers for passage of the legislation in your parish liturgies

"Mr. Speaker, how can we fail to act? Legislative obstruction in the face of preventable suffering and death is not only a failure of leadership. It is immoral and shameful.

The eyes of our God — who hungers for justice and commands us to welcome the stranger and bind the wounds of those left by the side of the road — are on us."

-Letter to House Speaker John Boehner from Fr. Larry Snyder, CEO of Catholic Charities USA, and 30 other Catholic leaders



Distributing Holy Communion at U.S. Bishops' Mass at the U.S.-Mexico border

"Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that **migrants and refugees** do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are **brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected, and loved.**"

-Pope Francis
on World Day of Migrants

"I call upon our political leaders to reform our nation's broken immigration system. **The time to act is now.** As pastors, we see the human consequences of this broken system each day in our parishes and social service programs, as families are separated, migrant workers are exploited, and our fellow human beings risk everything to find a better life for themselves and the ones they love. Our nation should no longer tolerate an unjust system."

*Statement of Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz on Immigration Reform
Archbishop of Louisville, Kentucky
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
June 5, 2014*

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