

Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda, Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis:

Heartfelt greetings to Cardinal Tobin and all who are participating in the Newark Catholic Day of Action for Immigrant Children and Families! Thank you for your powerful witness in support of our immigrant brothers and sisters. I'm grateful that the Church of Newark remains faithful to the spiritual legacy of Mother Cabrini, who long ago brought the love of Christ to New Jersey's immigrant communities.

Sadly, the faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis are all too well acquainted with the heartache and anxiety that are often the byproduct of our broken immigration system. Reflecting our common Catholic convictions concerning the dignity of each human life, the bonds of human solidarity, and the importance of keeping families together, we share your commitment to working for the change that Christ-centered justice requires.

Please be assured of my gratitude and prayers for all who will participate in the Day of Action. May the Lord of Compassion bring great fruit to your labors.

Bishop John Stowe, OFM Conv., Bishop of Lexington, KY

I applaud the Church in Newark for making a public statement and standing in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters at a time when they have been subjected to dehumanizing cruelty and suffered the consequences of our nation's inability to create a just and fair immigration policy that benefits everyone. The Trump administration continues to find ways to increase the hardships experienced by the most vulnerable. It is well past time to end the detention of children, the separation of families, the raids in workplaces with no consideration of the human costs for the people and families affected and it is time to affirm the human dignity of those struggling to survive, those whose work contributes to the well-being of our nation, those whose youthful dreams are about creating a better nation and world. May our faithful communities everywhere find ways to stand in solidarity with the immigrants and against cruelty.

Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, Archdiocese of Washington

In his Message for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis calls attention to a "globalization of indifference" where "migrants, refugees, displaced persons and victims of trafficking have become emblems of exclusion [and] are often looked down upon." The signs of meanness we see around us are an alarm, he observes, which should spur us and all people of good will to charity, compassion and a greater humanity. This crisis is not only about those who have felt compelled to leave their homeland in search of a better and safer life, but all of us, the whole human family.

In the light of the Gospel and Christian tradition, we recognize the face of Christ in each migrant and refugee, and so we must respond to these poor and vulnerable people just as we would to Jesus. Their plight should arouse our compassion, particularly the children and families, so many of whom have been held in detention at the border.

Every human being is entitled to respect for his or her inherent God-given dignity. However, the current legal system is clearly not adequate to the task of respecting the dignity of migrants and refugees or otherwise seeing to the humanitarian needs of innocent children and their families. We ourselves must do what we can to help, including raising public awareness to press for positive action by the authorities at the border, and by Congress and the Administration. What is needed are community-based alternatives to detention, as well as

support for migrant and refugee resettlement programs, and support to address the root causes that push migration from home countries.

Let us work together in prompting officials to put aside partisanship and enact solutions that will enhance the humanity of these children and families. Moreover, "the presence of migrants and refugees – and of vulnerable people in general – is an invitation to recover some of those essential dimensions of our Christian existence and our humanity," the Holy Father says. "When we show concern for migrants, we also show concern for ourselves, for everyone; in taking care of them, we all grow."

Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan, Diocese of Camden

There has been no political will to fix our country's broken immigration system which has resulted with it spiraling out of control and recently reaching horrific levels with the cruel separation of children from their parents as they crossed the border. As people of faith we Catholics do not view this tragedy through a partisan lens but with faith filled concern for our country which has a proud and glorious history of welcoming immigrants and refugees who are forced either by economics or fear for their lives to leave their native places and cross the border without proper papers.

The Diocese of Camden following the SHARE THE JOURNEY CAMPAIGN of Pope Francis has been providing the opportunity for pilgrims to visit the Texas/Mexico border in order to understand better the situation by meeting and speaking with those directly affected by the crisis at the border, such as, Sister Norma Pimentel and the refugees who are brought to her respite center in McAllen, Texas; the men and women of the border patrol who protect our country's borders; local home owners and residents in south Texas; volunteers from across the country and young people at nearby colleges. For our diocesan pilgrims these visits have been eye opening experiences focused not on politics but on the human beings affected by this crisis.

In February of 2018 I met with a group of anxious and fearful Dreamers who were brought to this country as children. These young adults only know and love the United States as their country. They have pursued education; some have gone to college; others want to serve in the military; they desire to get their careers off the ground and all work. Their worry is that at any time their ability to stay in the USA could end. We want them here. We need them here. They contribute to our society and are no threat to this nation.

I support the efforts of Faith in Action to keep a spotlight on this nightmare situation at the border and the havoc it is causing in many communities across the country. I welcome the leadership of Cardinal Tobin, the Archbishop of Newark. A safe, just and fair resolution is possible and can happen with the will of the people and the commitment of elected officials to fix our broken immigration system.

Safe protocols for refugees and immigrants must be followed; these women, men and children are not our enemies. Our borders must be protected as we welcome, protect, promote and integrate immigrants and refugees who come here seeking the American dream.

Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville, Archdiocese of Washington:

Thank you for your work advocating for our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters. I very much appreciate your partnership with the Justice for Immigrants coalition and your continued efforts to highlight the protection needs of immigrant children.

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor, Diocese of Little Rock:

Greetings to all who are participating in the Catholic Day of Action for Immigrant Children. I want to express my support to Cardinal Joseph Tobin, and to all gathered in Newark for your efforts to convince the administration that they must stop demonizing and detaining children and families who pose no threat to anyone. The images of those who have suffered and died trying to make their way to freedom "cry to the heavens," in the words of our USCCB leadership. Our faith calls us to oppose this cycle of violence.

Most of these refugees and asylum seekers come here fleeing desperate circumstances in their country of origin and are parents who have an obligation before God to protect their children and provide for them. If they cannot do so in their place of origin, they have the right—and at times, the obligation—to migrate to a place where they can fulfill these parental responsibilities. This right is rooted in the dignity and transcendence of the human person as created by God. Human rights are inherent in the human person. Societies can regulate the exercise of these rights for the common good, but societies cannot licitly deprive us of these rights because they come from God and so do not depend on recognition by the state. The most fundamental of these rights is the right to life and thus the right of access to the basic necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, basic medical care, and decent employment that pays enough to provide for one's family. This includes the right to immigrate to attain these necessities if desperate circumstances so require.

Most of the refugees and asylum seekers at our southern border come here fleeing desperate circumstances and seek only a place where they can live in peace and provide for their family. They are people like our own immigrant ancestors, many of whom came here fleeing desperate circumstances in the past—no one immigrates because things were going great in their home country. And since many of us would not even be here today had our own immigrant ancestors not been able to come here in their time of distress, we now have an obligation to do all that we can to help our brothers and sisters who are dealing with desperate circumstances in the present. This Day of Action focuses on Immigrant Children, the most vulnerable of those who are being traumatized by the actions of our government, separating them from their parents, often neglecting their most basic needs, but the same principles apply to adults as well.

In 2008 I wrote a pastoral letter on the Human Rights of Immigrants which discusses this topic in greater detail, including 1) immigration as an intrinsic human right, 2) the legitimate role of national borders, and 3) when unjust laws lose their binding force—if you are interested, you can download it from the Diocese of Little Rock website (<https://dolr.org/bishop/i-was-a-stranger>). Sadly, not much has changed in the last 11 years, certainly not for the better. So, as you advocate for Immigrant Children today, don't forget that what we really need is comprehensive immigration reform that welcomes immigrants especially refugees and asylum seekers, facilitates their adaptation to life in the United States and provides an easy path to citizenship.

Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger, Diocese of Tucson

I am pleased to stand in solidarity with those whose voices will be heard at the Newark Catholic Day of Action.

The concern for a just and compassionate response to asylum-seekers and immigrants, and most especially for children who come to us, flows from our belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our concern for humane treatment of immigrants, the unification of families, and a stable status for *Dreamers* is a reflection of our belief that the image of God is found in every human being. Policies that vilify immigrants, separate families, incarcerate children, or deport persons whose sole experience is life in the United States, are inconsistent with who we are as followers of Jesus Christ or faithful citizens of this great Nation.

Representing a Diocese on the forefront of immigration issues, I can attest to the truth that the vast majority of those persons seeking life in the United States desire only the opportunity to lead productive lives through hard work and commitment. It is my hope that our broken immigration system will be fixed through thoughtful and humane legislation that calls to mind our immigrant heritage and results in a path to citizenship.

May the authentic values of our forefathers and foremothers come to life in us so that our great Nation might continue to be a shining beacon of liberty, truth and justice for all.

Auxiliary Bishop Edward M. Deliman, Archdiocese of Philadelphia

I watched the evening news recently only to witness a young child crying huge tears and saying "I want my Daddy, he didn't do anything wrong."

The only thing "wrong" that he did was to look for a better life for his family in a country with much promise. That promise is now in question as that child experiences separation from her family. The family is a gift to us from God. It is within the family that we love and learn to love.
Safe borders, yes.

Protection of the family, yes, also.