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Jennifer Carr Allmon
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 24, 2025

To the People of God in Texas,

The bishops of Texas will continue to work with governmental officials and other people of good will to implement policies that recognize the dignity of every person, prioritize family unity, and address the root causes of forced migration, while respecting the right and responsibility of our country to secure its borders, regulate immigration in an orderly process, maintain the rule of law, and keep its communities safe and peaceful.

In exercising the basic human right of religious liberty, all Catholics, regardless of national origin or citizenship status, have a right to gather for the celebration of Mass and to receive the Sacraments without harassment or intimidation. Our priests, deacons, and lay ministers are available to provide pastoral services, to offer the Sacraments, humanitarian support, and to provide spiritual graces that God desires for all his people. As the bishops of Texas, we stand in solidarity with the earlier statements issued by Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, president of the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\)](#) and Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, chairman of the [USCCB's Committee on Migration](#):

“The Catholic Church is committed to defending the sanctity of every human life and the God-given dignity of each person, regardless of nationality or immigration status. Church teaching recognizes a country’s right and responsibility to promote public order, safety, and security through well-regulated borders and just limits on immigration. However, as shepherds, we cannot abide injustice, and we stress that national self-interest does not justify policies with consequences that are contrary to the moral law. The use of sweeping generalizations to denigrate any group, such as describing all undocumented immigrants as ‘criminals’ or ‘invaders,’ to deprive them of protection under the law, is an affront to God, who has created each of us in his own image. Pope Francis has stated, ‘No one will ever openly deny that [migrants] are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable.’

“While an emphasis on anti-trafficking is welcomed, several of the executive orders signed by President Trump this week are specifically intended to eviscerate humanitarian protections enshrined in federal law and undermine due process, subjecting vulnerable families and children to grave danger. The open-ended deployment of military assets to support civil immigration enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border is especially concerning. Meanwhile, policies barring the consideration of any humanitarian claims—including those of unaccompanied

children and trafficking victims—have repeatedly failed to reduce irregular migration in a legal, sustainable, and humane manner.

“Preventing any access to asylum and other protections will only endanger those who are most vulnerable and deserving of relief, while empowering gangs and other predators to exploit them. Likewise, indefinitely halting refugee resettlement is unmerited, as it is already proven to be one of the most secure legal pathways to the United States. Even non-humanitarian legal immigration and naturalized persons are targeted by these policies in support of a so-called ‘unified American identity.’ Finally, the proposed interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment to limit birthright citizenship sets a dangerous precedent, contradicting the Supreme Court’s longstanding interpretation.

“We urge President Trump to pivot from these enforcement-only policies to just and merciful solutions, working in good faith with members of Congress to achieve meaningful, bipartisan immigration reform that furthers the common good with an effective, orderly immigration system. My brother bishops and I will support this in any way we can, while continuing to accompany our immigrant brothers and sisters in accordance with the Gospel of Life.”

As bishops of Texas, we urge pastors and lay ministers to help the immigrant community understand their rights under federal and state law, and to seek legal counsel if needed. We also encourage you to prepare prudently for emergencies and to create a family preparedness plan. The attached document has more practical information in this regard:

This year, Pope Francis is calling the Church into a Jubilee Year of Hope and, so, we pray and hope for a just and humane approach to migration in this country and around the world. May the Holy Family, who fled their homeland to protect the infant Jesus, watch over and protect each of you.