



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



January 24, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

In this emotionally charged time, we would do well to draw upon the guidance of Catholic moral principles. Many people are afraid, and many people are angry. It is imprudent and unnecessary to act from fear or from anger. As Catholics, we know that truth, justice and love are inseparable. It is therefore incumbent upon us to pray humbly so that Christ our Light can help us to act accordingly.

Please find attached to this email an advisory on basic legal rights held by migrants and refugees along with the most recent statement from the Texas Catholic Bishops in solidarity with the statement of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. I repeat my solidarity with my brother bishops in Texas and throughout the United States of America and to the teaching contained in the attached documents. Please read them in a spirit of prayer.

The substance of our pastoral response to the ongoing problem of injustice in our broken immigration system continues to be informed by compassion formed by authentic Catholic teaching on the dignity of the human person, the common good, and the preferential option for the poor and the most vulnerable. Part of the authentic Catholic teaching that informs our humanitarian response includes:

1. Each country has the right and responsibility to maintain the integrity of its borders and the rule of law. This includes the regulation of immigration. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2241)
2. Immigration should be an orderly process that respects the laws of each country involved-the sending country, the countries of transit, and by the receiving country. (USCCB, *Strangers No Longer*, #32, 92-93)
3. Those who enter a country, seek refugee settlement, or apply for immigration status should be screened in order to protect the common good. (USCCB, *Strangers No Longer*, nos.38-39)
4. Immigrants contribute to the good of society and are called to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying out civic burdens. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2241)

We advocate for laws that respect human rights including the right to seek asylum in the face of oppression and threats to human life. We do not advocate for the breaking of the law. Our government must promulgate laws that include both a secure border and a humane immigration policy that respects the integrity and unity of families.

As your bishop, I ask that you pray for a temperate spirit marked by the Peace of Christ promised by Him in His Gospel. Please be kind to each other and avoid incendiary language and actions that will not help us to act justly or mercifully. "Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body." (Colossians 3:15)

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ *Michael F. Olson*

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