



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SPOKANE

Office of the Bishop

March 28, 2017

Dear Parishioners,

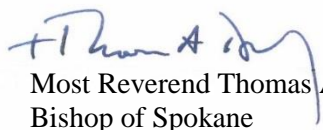
As many of you know, the response to the current administration's Executive Order regarding immigrants and refugees has led to an increase in anxiety and fear in many of our communities. Although the deportation of immigrants without legal status has received greater attention these past few months, it is an issue that has been with us for decades. In fact, over two million people were deported in just the past eight years, some of whom come from our parishes here in eastern Washington.

Sadly, efforts for comprehensive immigration reform have largely been unsuccessful. The complexity of the issue warrants careful reflection and prudent action. Compassion for those refugees fleeing countries torn by violence, persecution and crime demands a Gospel response that follows the mandate "*What you have done for the least ones, you have done for me.*" (MT: 25:40) Yet, Catholic social teaching holds that governments exist for the sole reason of attaining the common good. (*Pacem in Terris*, 53-61). In so doing, the state must protect the rights and duties of individuals who have legitimate concerns about the security of our nation. The Church recognizes that sovereign nations have a right to control their borders and to maintain policies that keep citizens safe. However, the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "prosperous nations are obliged" to welcome those whose lives are in jeopardy (2241).

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and elected officials work to find solutions to this complex issue, I ask that the pastors and other parish leaders exercise vigilance over the civil and human rights of those who are undocumented. I am pleased that Catholic Charities of Spokane is assisting with legal issues and advice regarding immigration. I encourage parishes and institutions to engage their assistance as needed. Of particular concern are those families that are being torn apart. Deporting undocumented parents, while leaving children and family behind, does not serve to build up family life.

To our brothers and sisters who are suffering at this time, let us remember that God, our loving Father, who knows all things and has numbered even the hairs on your head, will watch over and protect you and your families. Let your trust in the Lord and prayers of Our Lady of Lourdes, guide you and help you remain strong. And as Catholic faithful of eastern Washington, let us continue to pray for one another, for our elected officials and our country.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Thomas A. Daly, D.D.
Bishop of Spokane