



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WISCONSIN CATHOLIC BISHOPS RELEASE PASTORAL LETTER ON IMMIGRATION

On February 11, Wisconsin’s Catholic bishops issued a [pastoral letter](#) expressing support for immigrants and encouraging everyone to uphold human dignity, the common good, and the rule of law.

The bishops explain that “every person, regardless of immigration status has certain fundamental human rights which can never be infringed.” At the same time, in upholding this truth and showing solidarity with immigrants, the Church “is not doing so to impede the lawful enforcement of immigration laws, nor to encourage illegal entry.” There is no contradiction in urging everyone to follow the law and to uphold fundamental human rights.

The letter describes how the Catholic Church’s teaching on immigration is based in the Gospel. “Our Lord Jesus Christ insisted that when we welcome the stranger, we welcome Him.” The bishops quote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that “more prosperous nations are obliged to the extent that they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of security, and the means and livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin.” At the same time, the bishops state that nations have the right “to regulate immigration for the sake of the common good.”

In formulating immigration policy, the bishops note that distinctions must be made between “immigrants who present genuine risks and dangers to society” and “those who have been here for years, have no criminal record, and have lived peacefully and contributed to the common good.” The bishops are unequivocal in saying that they support comprehensive immigration reform that is “balanced and humane,” and that “the Church opposes both completely open borders and completely closed borders.”

The bishops stress that the current immigration crisis exists because the “immigration system has been broken for decades, no matter which party holds power.” Immigration policy “must achieve a proper balance between migrant rights and sovereign rights.” The bishops maintain that “[m]ass deportation of millions of people is not the answer.”

The bishops call on all citizens to press “our federal elected officials so that they finally pass comprehensive immigration reform. As citizens, it is our responsibility to ensure that we are governed by just laws. There is no inherent contradiction in upholding human dignity, the common good, and the rule of law.”

The bishops remind everyone that “we are all sisters and brothers in Christ, made in the image and likeness of God.” They urge everyone to “show great tenderness and solidarity to those who fear that their families could be separated and their lives uprooted.” They close by praying that we “together resolve to be one, peaceful nation under God.”

The letter may be found at the Wisconsin Catholic Conference website in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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