



Department of Communication Archdiocese of San Antonio

Statement of Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller, MSpS, and Auxiliary Bishop-elect Michael Boulette in regards to President Donald Trump's announcements on immigration

January 27, 2017

In fulfilling his campaign pledges, President Donald Trump has recently signed executive orders that will dramatically alter the refugee program in the United States, build an expansive new border wall on our boundary with Mexico, and heighten immigration detention. This is not something that is unexpected or surprising; he is doing exactly what he said he would do during the election. However, it is truly disheartening and profoundly disappointing to see these actions ultimately come to fruition.

While being promoted as a response to safety concerns in this country, these are unprecedented announcements that will punish the majority of immigrants who want to come to America -- the land of the free -- for a better future.

In a letter sent to President Trump prior to his inauguration, Pope Francis wrote, "Under your leadership, may America's stature continue to be measured above all by its concern for the poor, the outcast and those in need who, like Lazarus, stand before our door." The faithful must continue to pray for wisdom for our country's leaders; that their decisions are guided by spiritual and ethical values, especially, our Holy Father states, "At a time when our human family is beset by grave humanitarian crises demanding far-sighted and united political responses."

Over the past several months, we have seen the fear and heard the heart-wrenching stories from many families who may be impacted by these initiatives. They have approached us and we have been spending time talking to them, comforting them the best we can, and praying for them constantly. They don't know what's going to happen; if parents are going to be separated from their children. We share in their pain and sadness.

Our archdiocese and Catholic Charities agency, along with other groups and dioceses across the country, will continue to stand in solidarity with refugees, immigrants, and their families. We will work for responsible and comprehensive immigration reform. All agree that change needs to take place, but it must be carried out in a humane manner which respects the dignity of the human person. Certainly concerns about security must be strongly addressed, but not through political measures which do more harm than good.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has a working group to closely monitor executive memoranda and legislation on immigration, and we will both be working closely with other bishops -- as well as leaders from other faith communities -- on these issues in the days, weeks, and months ahead. I (Archbishop Gustavo), will be especially involved through my role as chairman of the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity. We cannot escape our responsibilities to the poor and vulnerable who are desperately fleeing their countries to escape violence.

While acknowledging the rights of the nation, we are also called to compassion for the weak and those in need. Let us pray that all in our nation will be filled with that compassion and concern for the stranger.

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