



Statement of Archdiocese of San Antonio Catholic Charities President/CEO J. Antonio Fernández concerning president’s actions to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as increase detention and deportation forces

These are troubling times for us. We are deeply saddened by the president’s recent executive actions concerning the construction of a border wall at the U.S. Mexico-border -- which impacts the western boundary of the Archdiocese of San Antonio -- as well as efforts to significantly increase immigrant detention and deportation, along with preempting the judgment of state and local law enforcement on how best to protect their communities.

All people are made in the image and likeness of God. Catholic Charities provides services to **all** people with respect, dignity and love, regardless of the person’s color, ethnic background or religious affiliation.

All people -- including migrants -- are worthy of our respect and compassion. We should pray and try to build bridges, not barriers, following the example of Pope Francis and our Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, MSpS.

These decisions could greatly impact two federal detention centers in the archdiocese – in Dilley and Karnes City -- which incarcerate migrant and refugee women and children. Catholic Charities provides assistance to these families.

Archbishop Gustavo has previously stated, “I have visited these detention facilities which are holding hundreds of family members from Central America and have asked myself: ‘Why do we feel compelled to place in detention such vulnerable individuals — young mothers with children who are fleeing persecution in their home countries?’ They have already gone through a horrific experience on their journey to safety at the hands of smugglers and others, victims of violence and sexual assault.”

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio stands in unity with Archbishop Gustavo and with Texas prelates such as Bishop Joe Vásquez of Austin, chairman of the Committee on Migration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB); as well as Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, president of the USCCB, who have voiced their concerns also on these issues.

Bishop Vásquez said yesterday, “While we respect the right of our federal government to control our borders and ensure security for all Americans, we do not believe that a large scale escalation of immigrant detention and intensive increased use of enforcement in immigrant communities is the way to achieve those goals. Instead, we remain firm in our commitment to comprehensive, compassionate, and common-sense reform.”

Cardinal DiNardo noted, “As archbishop of a Texas diocese, I believe that the order to construct a wall along our border with Mexico will only make migrants more susceptible to traffickers and smugglers -- putting their lives in needless danger. It also destabilizes the many vibrant interconnected communities that live in peace along our border.”

Despite these difficulties, and perhaps because of them, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc., will keep providing as many services as possible to all people, maintaining the highest quality programs in a caring and humanitarian way.

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About Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc.: Since 1941, Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc. has been helping those most in need in San Antonio and surrounding areas. The mission of Catholic Charities is to provide for the needs of the community through selfless service under the sign of love. We serve the hungry, the homeless, the desperate and those needing help when facing life’s daily challenges. We serve people of all faiths and all walks of life, from those not yet born to those at the end of life’s journey. We advocate social justice in order to eliminate oppression and build a just and compassionate society. For more information, visit www.ccaosa.org.

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