



February 20, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In February of 2017 I issued a statement related to the issue of immigration and refugees coming into the United States. In that statement, I made mention of the fact that as a Pro-Life Church we know that the demand of the Gospel of Life continues from conception and birth to a natural death, and that Gospel accountability extends beyond our national borders.

I went on to acknowledge that Catholic Christians in America have been among the most welcoming people, knowing that nearly all of us have come from immigrant families ourselves. At one time, our forebears fled the hardships of their homes from many countries around the world. I think of this when I read the Scripture passage that gives God's law to His people: "When an alien resides with you in your land, do not mistreat such a one. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God" (Leviticus 19:33-34).

I acknowledge that the issue of welcoming immigrants into our country while protecting our borders is a complicated one, as is indicated by the strong differences of opinion about it in our country today. As followers of the teachings of Jesus, we must continually bring the light of his Gospel to our discussions surrounding this and other difficult, complex matters.

Balancing the reasonable and appropriate measures we need to take to ensure the safety of our citizens while at the same time fulfilling the Gospel mandate may not always be easy or simple; but, it is both necessary and obtainable when people of good will work together. This is critical for us, since the Lord says he will judge us at the end of time, based on how we treated our brothers and sisters during our time on earth. As Jesus told us, "Whatever you did not do for one of these least brothers of mine, you did not do for me" (Matthew 25:40). America has been and must continue to be a place of refuge for people such as these.

In the last few days, the USCCB has asked all Bishops of the United States to encourage their people to participate in a National Catholic Call-In Day to Protect Dreamers. As you may already know, late last week, the Senate failed to achieve the 60 votes needed to move forward with debate on legislation to provide relief to Dreamers. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB President; Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB Vice President; and Bishop Joe S. Vásquez of Austin, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, together issued the following statement:

"We are deeply disappointed that the Senate was not able to come together in a bipartisan manner to secure legislative protection for the Dreamers. With the March 5th deadline looming, we ask once again that Members of Congress show the leadership necessary to find a just and humane solution for these young people, who daily face mounting anxiety and uncertainty."

*"We are also announcing a National Catholic Call-In Day to Protect Dreamers. This coming weekend, we will be asking the faithful across the nation to call their Members of Congress next **Monday, February 26**, to protect Dreamers from deportation, to provide them a path to citizenship, and to avoid any damage to existing protections for families and unaccompanied minors in the process."*

"Our faith compels us to stand with the vulnerable, including our immigrant brothers and sisters. We have done so continually, but we must show our support and solidarity now in a special way. Now is the time for action."

The instructions for participating in this call-in campaign are on the other side of this letter. This information is also in the Feb. 22 issue of The Catholic Accent and on our Diocesan social media outreach. I realize that this is short notice in this very busy Lenten time, but as we all know, legislation can sometimes move quickly, and in this instance, time is critical.

As I said last February, I pray to God that we will make good moral decisions on behalf of our citizens, as well as the many refugees and immigrants who are seeking safety or a better life in our country. The decisions we accept should be made out of an acknowledgement of the divinely-ordained freedom granted to all of God's children. In Jesus' own words, "Do not be afraid."

Peace to you and blessings upon those you love.

+ *Edward C. Malesic*
Bishop of Greensburg

Lenten Action for Dreamers: Congressional Call-In Campaign

Please participate in the Call-in Day to Congress on **Monday, February 26, 2018!** Your advocacy is critical to help the nearly 1.8 million Dreamers, young people who were brought into the United States by their parents as children. They may face deportation as soon as March 6, unless Congress reaches a bi-partisan deal to protect them. Please follow these easy steps to help:

1. Please call 855-589-5698 to reach the Capitol switchboard, and **press 1 to connect to your Senators.** Once you are connected to each Senator's office, please ask the person on the phone to **deliver this simple message:**
2. "I urge you to support a bipartisan, common-sense, and humane solution for Dreamers:
 - Protect Dreamers from deportation and provide them with a path to citizenship.
 - Reject proposals that undermine family immigration or protections for unaccompanied children.
 - As a Catholic, I know that families are not "chains," but a blessing to be protected.
 - Act now to protect Dreamers, our immigrant brothers and sisters."
3. Please call 855-589-5698 a second time to reach the Capitol switchboard again, and **press 2 to connect to your Representative.** Once you are connected to the Representative's office, please ask the person on the phone to **deliver the same message as above.**

After completing your call, please go to <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org> to learn more about Dreamers and find other ways to voice your support.