



Dear Vincentian Leaders,

Greetings;

I trust this letter finds you safe and warm during this unusual weather around the country.

I am writing to enlist your help in dealing with the crisis spreading through our immigrant communities. Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, including U. S. citizens from other cultures and ethnic groups, have been suffering persecution, intimidation and discrimination. Some are even families who have had members detained in mid-trip and not allowed to return to the United States.

The fear in many communities, even among those naturalized or here with proper documentation, is profound. Children are afraid to leave for school in the morning because they fear a parent will be picked up before they get home. This panic is leaving families without the opportunity to walk freely to go to their jobs, schools, churches or places of prayer.

As President Sheila Gilbert mentioned in our Capwiz legislative alert recently:

*The Society has long supported a warm and caring welcome for immigrants, with our views first formally crystallized in a 2004 Position Statement. Last year, that Position Statement was updated with a strong call for comprehensive reform of our nation's immigration laws, which has sadly not yet happened for more than 30 years now, despite widespread agreement that such is long overdue.*

Here is how you can help.

1. Distribute this letter to leaders in your region.
2. Make sure that Vincentians in your region know about the resources available to people that are detained. This link has been distributed by members of The Vincentian Family:  
<https://www.nilc.org/issues/immigration-enforcement/everyone-has-certain-basic-rights/>.
3. Pray that Vincentians can offer comfort and hope to families that are facing humiliation, upheaval, and separation.

The U. S. Bishops remind us: Opponents of both lawful and unauthorized immigration often inaccurately criticize the Catholic Church as supportive of "open borders" in an attempt to discredit the strength of the Church's voice in the immigration policy dialogue. In *Strangers No Longer*, the U.S. Bishops made clear that despite the sovereign's right to control its borders and engage in enforcement of immigration laws, the "human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected." The Bishops declared that "regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected . . . Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary."

After a reflection and discernment please act as you see fit. We cannot be silent and passive. Silence is affirmation.

In Christ's Love,

Members of the Hispanic/Latino Task Force (Membership listed below)

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Aldo Barletta	Western Region Representative & Formator	St. Mary, Marysville, WA,
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John Edward Kane, C.M.	Eastern Region Representative	Archidiocesis de Philadelphia
Ruben Martinez	North Central Region Representative & Formator	St. Thomas Aquinas, Detroit MI
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