



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)

Lista de miembros y representantes del Equipo Hispano/Latino

| | | |
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| Margarita Galindo | National VP & Formator | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, San Diego, |
| Aldo Barletta | Western Region, Diocesan Representative & Formator | St. Mary, Marysville, WA, |
| Emilio Ferrer-Soto Diácono | Mideast Region, Archdiocese of Indianapolis Formator | St. Patrick Conference, Indianapolis, IN, |
| María Elena González | Mideast Region Representative & Formator | St. Patrick Conference, Indianapolis, IN,, |
| Sylvia González | Western Region Representative & Formator | St. Finbar, Glendale, CA, |
| John Edward Kane, C.M. | Eastern Region Representative | Archdiocesis de Philadelphia |
| Reubén Martínez | Mideast Region Archdiocese of Detroit Presenter | St. Christopher - St. Thomas Aquinas Conference, Detroit MI |
| Eva Pereira | South Central Region Representative & Formator | Archidiecetano de Santa Fe |
| Juan Pereira | South Central Region, Diocesan Representative & Formator | Archidiecetano de Santa Fe |
| Mirya Muñoz-Roach | Western Region, Diocesan Representative & Formator | La Divina Providencia, Kent WA, |
| Amy Rodríguez | Western Region, Diocesan Representative & Formator | St. Raphael, Glendale, AZ, |
| Noelia Salazar | Midwest Region Representative & Presenter | Our Lady of Loreto, Foxfield, CO, |
| Oscar Salazar | Midwest Region, Diocesan Representative & Presenter | Our Lady of Loreto, Foxfield CO, |
| Guadalupe Sosa Valencia | Western Region Representative & Formator | St. Agnes, Phoenix, AZ, |
| William Rodriguez | Southeast Region Representative & Presenter | Diocetano de Puerto Rico |
| Katherine Ramirez | Eastern Region, Diocesan Representative | Diocetano de New York |
| Maria E. Baylon | Presenter | Divina Providencia, Archidiecetano de Seattle/King |
| María Eulalia Chan | Presenter | St. Sophia Conference, San Diego, CA |
| Bertha de Alegría | Formator | St. Mary, Los Angeles, CA |
| Rosa Flores | Presenter | Divina Providencia, Seattle, WA |
| Cristina García | Formator | Our Lady of the Valley, El Paso, TX |
| Robert Márquez | Mideast Region Archdiocese of Indianapolis Formator | St. Philip Neri Conference, Indianapolis, IN, |
| Didy Martinez | Mideast Region Archdiocese of Detroit Presenter | St. Christopher - St. Thomas Aquinas Conference, Detroit, MI |
| Gennette Medina | Presenter | St. Sophia Conference, San Diego, CA |
| Stephanie M. Méndez | Presenter | Concilio del Condado de Contra Costa |
| Jose Antonio Mireles | Formator | St. Luke, El Paso, TX, |
| Timothy Schulz | Formator | Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, San Diego |

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| Irma Trujillo | Formator | Our Lady of the Valley, El Paso, TX, |
| Jesús García | Presenter | Church of Good Shepard, Concilio del Condado de Contra Costa |
| Stephen Krank | Formator | Concilio del Condado de Contra Costa |