



Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!

July 6, 2018

My dear brother priests,

As you know, there has been world-wide anxiety regarding refugees and migrants from many places and for a variety of reasons. From those escaping war and terror in the Middle East or poverty and hunger in Africa, even to those at our own borders escaping violence, drugs, and corruption in Central America and Mexico, migrants and refugees are more prevalent now than at any time since the end of the Second World War. America, European countries, and many other places are straining to cope with this reality. Tensions are high as some find refugees to be a threat, while others wish to respond with a courageous spirit of welcome and trust for these people.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has called for us to respond with open hearts and a humane spirit to the needs of migrants and refugees. We must respond to them with the attitude of Christ, who calls us to welcome the stranger.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has consistently called for compassion regarding issues related to our nation's borders, and we have been critical of both Democratic and Republican leaders for not addressing the issue of immigration reform. If it had not been clear that our nation is in need of a serious and just immigration reform, it should be by now! We have experienced nothing short of a crisis at our borders in recent years with the arrival of unaccompanied minors, young parents with children, and many people in need. We have witnessed the bureaucratic treatment of these human beings as they try to enter our nation, in spite of the fact that many are seeking asylum from violence and fear of death. This whole situation is unjust, inhumane, and brings out the worst of prejudices within our culture.

The Bishops have consistently said that every nation has a right to secure its borders, but that it must also reform its immigration processes so that people are treated justly, humanely, and compassionately. The weekend of July 14-15, I will ask our parishioners across the archdiocese to write to our national leaders in the Senate and House of Representatives, urging them to move forward with a dignified immigration reform, and to change the laws that allow for the separation of children from their parents. To that end, you will receive postcard pages for your parishioners to sign and instructions on how to handle them. A copy of these directions and a sample postcard page are included with this letter.

Congress has the power to act and help heal the terrible wounds plaguing us in this situation. We are not asking for a partisan decision and we are not supporting one political party over another. We are on the side of human beings, just as we are with all life-related issues, from abortion to euthanasia, the death penalty, child hunger, and the whole range of issues that affect the dignity and respect of the human person.

As we just celebrated the independence of our country this 4th of July, let us take a stand again for freedom, respect, and the God-given rights of every human being.

Fraternally in Christ, our High Priest,

Most Reverend Gustavo García-Siller, M.Sp.S.
Archdiocese of San Antonio