



**ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

May 10, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We continue in this season of Easter to celebrate the presence of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus in our midst! As our Catechism puts it so beautifully: "The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life." It is this liberating love and life that enabled the Apostles huddled together for fear of the authorities to be transformed into courageous and joyful witnesses to the Gospel.

It is this resurrection hope that has empowered so many Catholic and other Christian immigrants over the years to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to find a way to protect and provide for their families in the United States. Even in the face of the nativist and xenophobic current in American culture that has reared its ugly head throughout our history; the Church has found ways to ensure protection and provision for its immigrant members. We recall Fr. McGivney who founded the Knights of Columbus as a fraternal benefit society offering low-cost life insurance to immigrant families facing destitution if a breadwinner died. Sadly, today many immigrant families face incredible hardships as breadwinners and caregivers are detained or deported. There is even discussion that U.S. citizen children of undocumented immigrants should be deprived of basic benefits and rights (echoes of California's short-lived Prop. 187). Unaccompanied minors fleeing for their lives, U.S. citizen children of TPS recipients from multiple countries, pregnant immigrant mothers, and other immigrant children are viewed as expellable and indeed expendable – as children are separated from parents and some are sent back to certain death in their countries of origin.

We might be tempted to see the worsening climate around immigration in this country as occasion for despair, but it must not be so. It is an occasion for action, for solidarity, for hope! For the Church stands where she always stood by the grace of God: with the marginalized and oppressed. Our parishes are caring for immigrants who worship together and are missionary disciples together in mission with the native born. Our Catholic Charities is the second-largest provider of social services in the U.S. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), of which I am Chair of the Board, is respected nation-wide as a trusted trainer and convener networking Catholic and community legal immigration programs throughout the nation. Our immigrant sisters and brothers themselves play key roles in leadership in our parishes and are the life of our Church!

Many of these actions reflect American values as well. Many American immigrant forebears were welcomed by the Statue of Liberty and the poem of Emma Lazarus which said, and still

proclaims "Give me your tired, and your poor, and your huddled masses yearning to be free." But as a Church we must not only call America to better live up to its stated values, we must also as a Church live up to and proclaim with our lives the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To that end, I invite you to respond in two ways:

1. Join Bishop Freyer, Bishop Nguyen, and I in supporting efforts to break through the blocking of bipartisan solutions and to provide a path to citizenship for Dreamers calling for a vote on the Dream Act or the USA Act. More at rcbo.org/usa-act.

2. Join me at the Mass for Immigrants which is to be held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, on Sunday, June 24, 2018 at 3:30 PM. More at rcbo.org/immigrationministry.

In particular, I am inviting a delegation of ten leaders from each parish, center and religious community led by pastors, administrators, priests, deacons and religious, with a leader appointed to carry a parish banner in procession. Parishes are of course welcome and encouraged to bring larger groups on buses, public transportation, or carpools. While much of the energy and support around justice for immigrants has been carried courageously by the Latino community, it certainly affects brothers and sisters from around the world who make their home among us in Orange County: Korean, Filipino, East Asian, Chinese, African, Middle-Eastern, European descent, and other places as well.

I invite all to join Archbishop Gomez and me and other Bishops, clergy, women and men religious, in Los Angeles on June 24 to give witness to our immigration stories and to pray for the struggles of immigrants, which Archbishop Gomez calls "one of the great human rights issues of our time." Please forward to the Office of Life, Justice and Peace the name of the parish leader carrying the banner and the names of the other 9 or more leaders by Tuesday, June 19 at eramirez@rcbo.org.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the Star of the New Evangelization draw us to the heart of her Son. Thank you for all that you do for so many whose lives intersect ours in the Body of Christ. We live in the hope of the resurrection!

Gratefully yours in the Lord,



Most Reverend Kevin W. Vann, J.C.D., D.D.
Bishop of Orange in California

KWV/mb