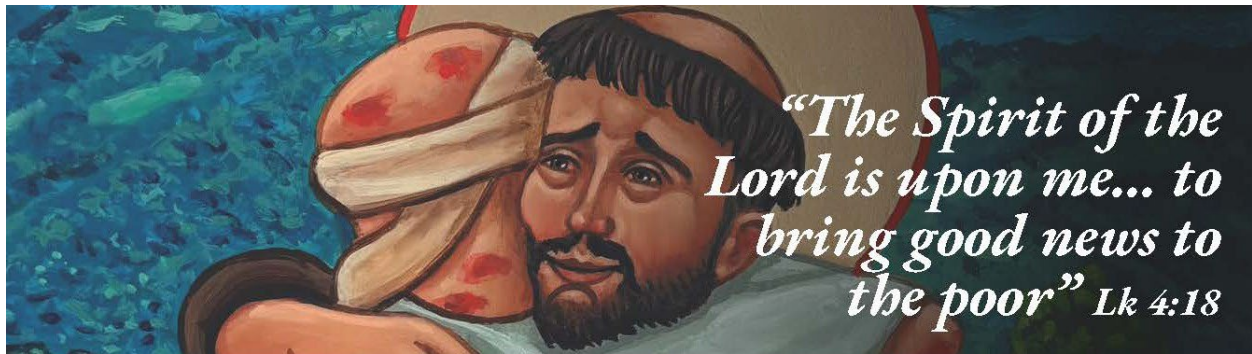




You are not alone: Accompanying migrants in a tumultuous time.

The Catholic Church in the United States has been nurtured and strengthened by the wide variety of immigrant communities that have arrived on our shores during the past 250 years. The various waves of predominantly Catholic immigrants from Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere over the last two centuries have substantially influenced the religious and cultural dimensions of our nation. Today, the United States is the country with the fourth largest population of Catholics, many of whom are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

Migrants have also played a critical role to the building of America and made significant contributions to its development and vibrance. Despite their contributions to the Church and society, immigrants continue to be resented, feared, and dehumanized. Current U.S. immigration policies, rhetoric, and actions are evidence of that reality.

President Trump ran for reelection on a platform of taking control of and “closing” the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as undertaking the largest deportation in history. These mass deportation efforts have been underway since the President took office in January 2025. The first months of the Administration have been marked by an all-of-government approach to immigration enforcement and removal of noncitizens from the United States.

As the Administration moved to carry out a promised one million deportations in its first year, the lives of thousands of individuals and families were uprooted. Immigration raids in warehouses and factories left many afraid to report for work; sudden deportations separated children from their parents; the threat of enforcement has deterred immigrants from attending religious services; and some have been deported to life-threatening situations in countries they’ve never even

been to before. Noncitizens in the United States face additional challenges, such as social and economic vulnerability, isolation, and anxiety.

A recently published report issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Evangelical Association, [*One Part of the Body*](#), highlighted the significant impact that these enforcement efforts could have on Catholic communities in the United States. It found that nearly one out of five Catholics are vulnerable to deportation or could lose at least one family member if the United States government were to deport all those vulnerable to deportation without any change in law.

Given the tenuous conditions facing migrants, and particularly those migrants who are Catholic, the timing for [Catechetical Sunday 2026](#) could not be better. It falls on the Sunday directly preceding [National Migration Week](#), which culminates with the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR) on September 27th. WDMR is an opportunity for global church and the Catholic faithful to engage in prayer, reflection, and action on behalf of migrants who are forced to flee their homes. National Migration Week is a uniquely US-based celebration that builds on the ideas put forth in WDMR and shaped accordingly for an American context.

The theme for Catechetical Sunday 2026, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to bring good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18; cf. Is 61:1) is also pertinent as it reveals Jesus’ mission to bring hope, healing, and freedom—especially to the poor, the brokenhearted, and the forgotten. In our current situation, migrants and their families are particularly vulnerable. Catechetical Sunday challenges us to consider how we respond to migrants who live among us, particularly those who were forced to leave their homes under threat of unjust punishments, torture, or even death. It is also an opportunity to reflect on how the Church has responded to the migration situation in recent years and consider what might come next.

In November 2025, the bishops of the United States issued a [special message on immigration](#). It was the first special message issued since passage of the special message on the contraception mandate in 2013. These types of messages are rare, and their infrequency demonstrate the importance of the issue addressed by the body of bishops. The special message passed in 2025 did so almost unanimously, with 216 in favor, 5 against, and 3 abstentions.

In it, the bishops of the United States expressed deep pastoral concern for immigrants and for the climate of fear, division, and uncertainty surrounding immigration in the nation today. Rooted in Catholic teaching and the Gospel call to uphold the dignity of every person made in the image of God, they lament family separations, harsh detention conditions, threats to sacred and humanitarian spaces, and rhetoric that dehumanizes migrants. At the same time, they affirmed the legitimate responsibility of nations to maintain secure and orderly borders through just and humane laws. Calling for meaningful immigration reform, the bishops rejected indiscriminate mass deportations and urged Catholics and all people of good will to accompany immigrants with compassion, practical support, and hope, following Christ's command to love the vulnerable and the stranger.

The underlying point of the special message reflected their long-standing support for vulnerable migrant populations and in building an infrastructure responsive to their needs. This includes the work of Catholic Charities, related Catholic agencies, and various other parish ministries. Through its engagement with legislators to pass legislation that affirms the well-being of migrants, and social workers who labor tirelessly to provide a warm welcome, the Church demonstrates a commitment to live in solidarity with these groups. While reaffirming this kind of engagement, it is not merely an institutional commitment to do so, but a challenge to Catholics everywhere to evaluate where they stand on this issue and to find ways how they can help support vulnerable migrants living in their communities.

To that end, and coinciding with the release of the special message, the bishops also launched a new initiative, the [You are not alone](#) campaign to assure migrants and their families that the Church stands with them, offering pastoral support and accompaniment during this difficult time. It is a whole church effort, given that it needs the support of Catholics across the country if it is to be successful. It rests on four key pillars:

1. [Emergency and Family Support](#): Immigrants and their families need your help. Whether it is educating communities on their legal rights, responding to enforcement actions taking place in your community, or providing support after enforcement has occurred, these resources provide guidance on how you can engage immigrants in need of your support.

2. [Solidarity through Public Prayer and Witness](#): As threats of family separation, detention, and deportation rise, people of faith across the country are coming together to publicly stand with migrant and refugee communities. The Missionaries of Hope Toolkit and related Rosary resources equip individuals, parishes, and dioceses with everything they need to organize prayerful, public witness rooted in Catholic teaching.
3. [Accompaniment and Pastoral Care](#): It is important to support clergy, lay leaders, and parish communities in providing pastoral care and accompaniment to immigrants—whether ministering to those detained and their families navigating the immigration system or walking with farmworkers through practical, pastoral, and spiritual support that upholds their God-given dignity.
4. [Catholic Teaching and Migration](#): The Catholic Church’s teaching on migration is informed by both the Bible and by Catholic social teaching, handed down over generations. While neither the Bible nor the Church’s moral tradition provide any definitive or technical accounts of how immigration policies should be crafted, it does offer a framework that informs our engagement with immigrant communities and the political questions that affect immigrants and native-born persons alike. Better understanding its implication for the migration issue is critical to all the faithful.

It is important to emphasize that these acts of accompaniment and support are not just humanitarian gestures intended to better the lives of those under our care, as important as that is. They are also acts of evangelization, challenging each of us to think more deeply about our relationship to God and each other, and to question whether our behavior aligns more with priorities of the Gospel or with those of the world. They thus aim at conversion, drawing all of us more closely to the Gospel command to welcome the stranger and challenging us to reform our lives in accord with that message.

In his most recent encyclical, [Magnifica Humanitas](#), Pope Leo XIV reflects on the issue of migration and reinforces the obligations that we have toward migrants, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Here he writes that “A litmus test for social justice today is the treatment of migrants, refugees and those forced to move

due to poverty, violence, climate change and environmental disasters. The way a society treats them reveals whether its sense of justice is driven by fear or by the spirit of fraternity. [Pope Francis](#) urged us to see migrants not simply as a problem to be managed, but as a living image of the People of God on the move. They are people with dignity, resources and dreams, who have the right to be treated with respect and to ask to become active members of the societies that welcome them.”



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