



My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

In light of the present uncertainties and challenges that immigrants throughout the archdiocese are experiencing, I wish to address a few words of support and solidarity to the Catholics of our immigrant communities in parishes throughout the Archdiocese of Boston. Having spent my entire priesthood working with people newly arrived from other countries, many of whom were undocumented workers fleeing the wars and violence of Central America, I have seen up close the pain and suffering visited upon families who are forced by circumstances to live in the shadows, always fearful of discovery, and economic ruin.

Although many Americans are frustrated by a broken immigration system and others are fearful of the threat of terrorism, I believe that most people in this country recognize that we are a nation of immigrants and that we have an established history of assimilating people of different languages, religions, ethnicities into the magnificent mosaic that is America. The ideals of our country are so well expressed in the beautiful poem of Emma Lazarus that is engraved on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, which is described as, “a mighty woman with a torch... Her name, Mother of Exiles. From her beacon hand glows worldwide welcome...and she proclaims: ‘keep ancient lands, your storied pomp, give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free... I lift my lamp beside the golden door!’”

Just as we are a country of immigrants, so too we are a Church of immigrants. The Catholic Church in the United States has always stood with people who have come to this country from other lands and found in the Church a community and spiritual home. The arrival of so many from all over the globe has greatly enriched our country and our Church.

Here in Massachusetts, we have about 1 million immigrants living among and alongside of us, representing about 14 percent of the population of the state. Half of these people are now U.S. citizens. Studies have indicated that immigrants are large contributors to Social Security because they are largely of prime working age, and they pay into the system over a long period of time. This includes undocumented immigrants, the vast majority of whom are paying Social Security taxes but will never receive any benefits. Indeed, immigrants in Massachusetts pay



\$1.36 billion in state income taxes and \$1.28 billion in local property taxes. Immigrants often do the hardest work for the least pay as they come to this country to work, to support their families and are law-abiding people.

The Bishops of the United States, the leadership of the Catholic Church, is committed to working for comprehensive immigration reform and for a welcoming policy towards those who are fleeing persecution and violence. It is our fervent prayer that people of goodwill from both political parties will be able to come together and forge a comprehensive immigration policy and laws that will reflect the idealism of this country.

I am anxious to assure all of you, especially families in the most precarious situations, that your Church stands with you and will work hard to promote solutions to the challenges that you face. Indeed, many of the programs of Catholic Charities are geared towards the immediate needs of immigrant families.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, on his first journey as pope, went to the island of Lampedusa to express his support for the many refugees who arrived there and to warn the world against the globalization of indifference. We call on the whole community to heed his words. Know that you are constantly in our thoughts and prayers. You are not alone. You are an important part of our family and your Church will not cease to advocate on your behalf.

Calling on the powerful intercession of Mary the Mother of the Divine Shepherd for you and your loved ones, I remain

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Archbishop of Boston

