



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

December 12, 2016

To Our Immigrant Brothers and Sisters:

As we celebrate this Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we write with gratitude for those of you who, having come to this country seeking refuge and a life of dignity, join us to honor Our Lady of Guadalupe -- the patroness of all the Americas. Especially in this season of preparation for Christmas, we are reminded that our Savior Jesus Christ was born in a manger away from His home, and that the Holy Family themselves experienced a time as refugees in Egypt.

We know that since the November elections many of you have expressed concern about possible changes in immigration policies and practices. These possible changes are only speculation at this point, yet they have caused fear and uncertainty about work situations and even anxiety over deportation. We reaffirm what Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice-president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has said: “We want [immigrants] to know the Church is with them, offers prayers on their behalf, and is actively monitoring developments at the diocesan, state, and national levels to be an effective advocate on their behalf.”

Whatever happens, we want you to know that we will not abandon you. We will seek to protect you, our brothers and sisters, and do what we can to prevent unjust deportation. Jesus Christ clearly tells us in the scriptures that we are to serve our neighbors and protect the most vulnerable among us. We will do our best to be faithful to His command to welcome the stranger in need (Matt 25:35).

What is needed right now is trust in our Lord’s protection and His guidance for leadership in the Church, our state, and in our nation’s capital. We also need to pray for our political leaders – that they may consider the needs of all people, especially the most vulnerable. And, we need to work for immigration reform that respects families by trying to keep them intact and protects life by offering refuge to those who have escaped danger. We need to let our political leaders know that we support a just reform of our immigration system that provides a path for people to live a life of dignity in this country.

As bishops entrusted with the leadership of this local Church, we can assure you that the Archdiocese will continue to stand in solidarity with you, engage in the political process, and work towards a more just society.

Thank you for your prayers and for being such a vital part of the life of this local Church. On this the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we ask our mother's intercession to guide us and to give us hope.

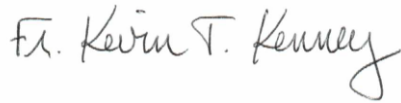
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!



Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



Most Reverend Andrew H. Cozzens
Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



Reverend Kevin Kenney
Vicar of Latino Ministry
Pastor of Divine Mercy Church, Faribault, MN