Statement of the Missouri Catholic Conference on Immigration

World Day of Migrants and Refugees
October 5, 2025

We, the Catholic bishops of Missouri, are aware of the growing anxiety and uncertainty in our country surrounding the issue of immigration. Therefore, in the context of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees and the Jubilee of Migrants, we wish to emphasize a central truth of our Christian faith: that every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and thus possesses an inherent dignity that is inviolable.

Many individuals and families have come to America fleeing violence, poverty, and extraordinary hardship. These are not mere statistics, but brothers and sisters in the human family, members who belong to and contribute to our local communities, parishes, and our nation.

As shepherds of the Church in Missouri, we support secure borders that ensure the safety and welfare of our nation. We also stand in solidarity with immigrants and their families, especially those who have already suffered so much in search of stability, peace, and safety.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (n. 2241) teaches that a society oriented to the common good must address the issue of immigration in a manner that is both just and merciful. Civil authorities are duty-bound to protect citizens and ensure the rule of law, especially against evildoers. Yet it is equally just, and profoundly Christian, to distinguish between violent criminals and those who are fleeing persecution or crushing poverty to seek a better life. As Pope St. John Paul II wisely stated, “His irregular legal status cannot allow the migrant to lose his dignity, since he is endowed with inalienable rights, which can neither be violated nor ignored.” (*Message for World Migration Day*, 1996)

We urge our elected officials at every level to reflect this truth in policy by pursuing comprehensive immigration reform that secures our borders while offering a just and merciful pathway for those who are already part of our communities. It is time to move

beyond temporary fixes to a solution that honors the dignity of all and provides security and protects the sovereignty of our nation. Both are necessary for a prosperous future.

While this challenge is complex, we cannot remain indifferent. Our Lord reminds us, “Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). Let us pray fervently for our nation’s leaders, that they may govern with wisdom and compassion, and for those who flee persecution and hardship in search of safety. Let us educate ourselves on what the Church teaches about migration and the dignity of the human person. And let us extend the hand of charity to migrants and refugees in our neighborhoods, schools, and parishes.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas, intercede for us.

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