



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS STAND IN DEFENSE OF ALL FAITHS IN RESPONSE TO EXECUTIVE ORDER ON REFUGEES

January 30, 2017

**"When did we see you a stranger and welcome you?"
Matthew 25:38**

WASHINGTON— Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the USCCB, have issued the following joint statement regarding the recent executive order on the new refugee policy announced by President Trump this past Friday. President Trump's executive order suspends the entry of refugees into the United States for 120 days. The order also indefinitely stops the admission of Syrian refugees and for 90 days, bars individuals from seven predominantly Muslim countries.

Full joint statement as follows:

Over the past several days, many brother bishops have spoken out in defense of God's people. We are grateful for their witness. Now, we call upon all the Catholic faithful to join us as we unite our voices with all who speak in defense of human dignity.

The bond between Christians and Muslims is founded on the unbreakable strength of charity and justice. The Second Vatican Council in *Nostra Aetate* urged us to sincerely work toward a mutual understanding that would "promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom." The Church will not waver in her defense of our sisters and brothers of all faiths who suffer at the hands of merciless persecutors.

The refugees fleeing from ISIS and other extremists are sacrificing all they have in the name of peace and freedom. Often, they could be spared if only they surrendered to the violent vision of their tormentors. They stand firm in their faith. Many are families, no different from yours or mine, seeking safety and security for their children. Our nation should welcome them as allies in a common fight against evil. We must screen vigilantly for infiltrators who would do us harm, but we must always be equally vigilant in our welcome of friends.

The Lord Jesus fled the tyranny of Herod, was falsely accused and then deserted by his friends. He had nowhere to lay His head (Lk. 9:58). Welcoming the stranger and those in flight is not one option among many in the Christian life. It is the very form of Christianity itself. Our actions must remind people of Jesus. The actions of our government must remind people of basic humanity. Where our brothers and sisters suffer rejection and abandonment we will lift our voice on their behalf. We will welcome them and receive them. They are Jesus and the Church will not turn away from Him.

Our desire is not to enter the political arena, but rather to proclaim Christ alive in the world today. In the very moment a family abandons their home under threat of death, Jesus is present. And He says to each of us, "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (MT 25:40).

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