



Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama

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Office of the Bishop

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STATEMENT ON IMMIGRATION
Most Reverend Steven J. Raica
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama

Having heard from people of good will from around the diocese, and as the Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama, I am deeply moved in light of recent national events to address the issue of immigration—a topic that touches many here in our diocese. It is at the very heart of who we are as a people and as a nation. Immigration is not just a matter of policy or politics; it is a profoundly moral (i.e., human) issue that calls us to respond with compassion, courage, and conviction.

Our faith reminds us that every individual is a cherished son or daughter of God, imbued with dignity and infinite worth. This belief shapes how we see and treat one another in response to our Lord's command to "love your neighbor as yourself." It is also at the basis of the evocative parable of the Good Samaritan. It challenges us to embrace every person as part of the human family, especially those seeking refuge and hope. At the same time, our shared history as a nation speaks to the power of opportunity and the resilience of those who dream of a better life. This is the story of America—a story of welcoming the stranger, embracing diverse cultures, and creating something truly symphonic while strengthening the very meaning of "We, the People."

America's strength has always been its openness to those who dare to hope. Many of our ancestors risked everything to come to our beloved land out of an unrelenting belief in the promise of a brighter future. Throughout the cities, villages, and country landscape of our diocese, we see this vivid contribution of those who have brought energy, creativity, and strength to our communities and churches. Many labor tirelessly for their families, pay taxes, enrich our faith communities, and remind us of the blessings that come from sharing cultures. Their dreams are tied to ours; their success to our collective future.

Still, we recognize that immigration is complex. Admittedly, sovereign nations have the right and responsibility to create laws and to control borders and ports of entry, in order to ensure good civic order and safety for all citizens. It is not an either-or situation but a balance—one where justice meets mercy and laws coexist with compassion. When we see immigrants struggling with an outdated system and onerous processes, we are reminded of our shared responsibility to address these concerns so that movement of people can be orderly, efficient, just, and fair for all.

The challenges of immigration reform are not insurmountable. With open hearts and clear vision, we can work toward solutions that honor both our laws, our homeland security, and our aspirational values while allowing for the movement of peoples who aspire to participate in the fullness of the American dream.

As we reflect on this issue, we are inspired by Christ's call to welcome the stranger. This is not an abstract command but a tangible invitation to live out our faith in practical ways. To open our hearts to the immigrant is to open our hearts to Christ Himself, Who reminds us that whatever we do for the least among us, we do for Him.

As always, we urge our lawmakers, community leaders, and every person of good will to take this issue seriously, to work diligently toward reasonable solutions and sensible accommodations whenever necessary, and to strengthen our nation as a place of hope for those yearning to "breathe free." Moving beyond division and fear, may we choose instead to see immigration as an opportunity for renewal and growth, not stagnation; understanding, not suspicion; hope, not despair.

As we journey together, may we remain a nation that honors the dignity of all people and strives to be a home for those seeking a better tomorrow. We lean into the promise of our faith and the strength of our shared humanity. That is my hope!

May God bless us all with wisdom, courage, and love.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Steven J. Raica". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Steven J. Raica
Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama