



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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### A Message of Hope: Regardless of Status, Catholics Stand with You

Inauguration Day is always special in the United States as the freedom to self-govern is on full display through the seamless transition of power. We are grateful to God for giving our country the grace to celebrate the inalienable rights for which He created us and which we seek for all people to enjoy. It is this freedom that has brought so many of our ancestors to our shores and borders and continues to call to people of goodwill.

With a new administration comes new ways of operating, and any such change can bring anxiety for those who are uncertain about the status of their freedoms. I write today to those who find themselves in this country – and in particular in the Diocese of Charlotte – without the benefit of proper documentation but of no less goodwill to express the solidarity of the Roman Catholic Church.

As executive orders are being considered for the early days of the new administration, please know we respectfully call on our leaders to consider the dignity of families and children, regardless of their status, and to take steps that respect and enhance their human dignity.

We stand with you – not to determine your legal status, since that is not our scope, but rather, as our brothers and sisters in Christ who find yourselves in a time of fear and uncertainty. We encourage you to place your trust in Jesus who, with Mary and Joseph, had to flee their homeland in search of security in Egypt.

Regardless of citizenship, as Roman Catholics we see all people as citizens of God's Kingdom where we are all unworthy to claim any status other than what is given us all by our Creator. With Jesus, in these days of anxiety, we say to you: Do not be afraid!

+Michael T. Martin, OFM Conv.  
Bishop of Charlotte