



ARCHDIOCESE OF PORTLAND

IN OREGON

March 28, 2017

Archdiocese of Portland's Statement on Sanctuary

The Archdiocese of Portland encourages solidarity with undocumented immigrants as manifested by accompaniment, witness, and vocal support.

In concurrence with statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Portland opposes immigration enforcement that

- Needlessly separates families
- Upends peaceful communities
- Endangers the lives and safety of the most vulnerable among us
- Breaks down the trust that currently exists between many police departments and immigrant communities
- Sows great fear in those communities

When sanctuary is meant to shield undocumented immigrants from lawful government authorities, the term "sanctuary" is both illegal and also implies legal ramifications that the Archdiocese of Portland cannot endorse.

Accompaniment

Sanctuary is much more than providing a physical space for someone at risk of deportation; it is a strategy and set of actions for faith communities, faith-based organizations, and people of conscience.

There are important things that a Catholic institution can do to help those at risk of deportation.

As a faith community, we are called to accompany our community members, parishioners and neighbors facing deportation.

Here are a few ways that parishes can show their support:

Support Shown as Advocacy

Parishes can mobilize their communities to make sure people are afforded their rights, and help those who are undocumented to know those rights *in advance*, instead of after they have been arrested and interrogated. For example, parishes can facilitate a "Know Your Rights" Charla, which Catholic Charities offers.

Depending on the circumstances, a church might be able to offer referrals to legal assistance, free legal clinics or other advice.

Many are not aware that they have a right to have counsel present at their interrogation, or even to have a hearing in immigration court. Insofar as a Catholic institution can help connect those at risk of deportation with lawyers now, they do a great service.

By offering accompaniment, we can advocate to stop deportations, and seek to obtain deferred action by a case-by-case level to keep families together.



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Support from the Community (Parish)

The families that we accompany are often in need of support in a multitude of different ways.

Most importantly they need the support of our friendship - so plan game nights, hang out with them, do what you can to make them feel at home and a part of your parish family.

Intentionally create opportunities for encounter between Hispanic and Anglo parishioners.

Support from the Pastor

(Examples of Statements of Support from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops)

“Moving forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to care for and respect the human dignity of all, regardless of their immigration status. During this unsettling time, we will redouble our work to accompany and protect our immigrant brothers and sisters and recognize their contributions and inherent dignity as children of God.” (USCCB)

“We will continue to support and stand in solidarity with immigrant families. We remind our communities and our nation that these families have intrinsic value as children of God. We are here to walk with you and accompany you on this journey.” (USCCB)

Sanctuary as Asylum

The term “sanctuary” has no legal standing today in either civil or canon law. Asylum is illegal.

If a parish declares itself a “sanctuary,” the implication is that the parish can provide legal and other protection. And that’s not true.

Calling yourself a sanctuary could in fact have the unintended consequence of making it easier for immigration officials to search your premises.

If the Government Comes Calling: Recommendations

If an immigration official does want to come onto the premises, before you allow them to enter, please ask for identification, the reason for the visit, and any documents they have, such as a warrant.

If they have a warrant from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), please ask them politely for the opportunity to review the warrant and to contact legal counsel, before they enter.

Read the warrant. If the person whose name appears on the warrant is not on the premises, so advise the officers. If there is no arrest warrant, then you need not give consent for officers to enter a building or home to make an arrest.

If they do not want to wait, still have someone contact the Archdiocese of Portland Office of Legal Affairs while you cooperate with the government officials.

If they do not have a warrant and it is not a matter of imminent danger, tell them politely they may not come on the premises, ask them for their contact information, and tell them to contact the Office of Legal Affairs. You should then contact Legal Affairs to report this interaction.