

**Remarks of Cardinal Blase Cupich, archbishop of Chicago, regarding immigration at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City**

January 19, 2025

While we wish the new administration success in promoting the common good, the reports being circulated of planned mass deportations targeting the Chicago area are not only profoundly disturbing but also wound us deeply. We are proud of our legacy of immigration that continues in our day to renew the city we love. This is a moment to be honest about who we are. There is not a person in Chicago, save the Indigenous people, who has not benefited from this legacy.

The Catholic community stands with the people of Chicago in speaking out in defense of the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers. Similarly, if the reports are true, it should be known that we would oppose any plan that includes a mass deportation of U.S. citizens born of undocumented parents.

Government has the responsibility to secure our borders and keep us safe. We support the legitimate efforts of law enforcement to protect the safety and security of our communities—criminality cannot be countenanced, when committed by immigrants or longtime citizens. But we also are committed to defending the rights of all people, and protecting their human dignity. As such, we vigorously support local and state legislation to protect the rights of immigrants in Illinois. In keeping with the Sensitive Locations policy, in effect since 2011, we would also oppose all efforts by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and other government agencies to enter places of worship for any enforcement activities.

The choice is not simply between strict enforcement and open borders, as some commentators would have us believe. Speaking this year to ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, for example, Pope Francis spoke of the need to balance migration governance with regard for human rights and dignity. "We are quick to forget that we are dealing with people with faces and names." The Holy Father has also been clear that "no one should be repatriated to a country where they could face severe human rights violations or even death." This is not idle speculation. Millions of migrants flee their homelands for safer shores precisely because it is a life or death issue for them and their children.

For members of faith communities, the threatened mass deportations also leave us with the searing question "What is God telling us in this moment?" People of faith are called to speak for the rights of others and to remind society of its obligation to care for those in need. If the indiscriminate mass deportation being reported were to be carried out, this would be an affront to the dignity of all people and communities, and deny the legacy of what it means to be an American.