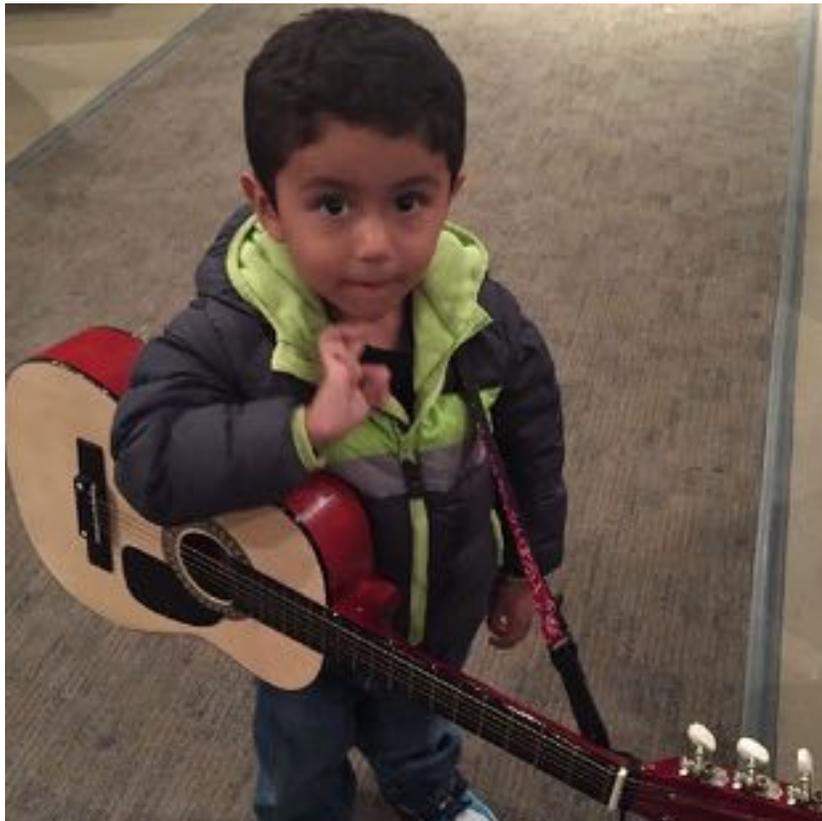


Diocesan Pastoral Response

Together in Christ: The Church's Pastoral Response to the Crisis of Immigrants Facing Imminent Deportation



Projects for Peace and Justice
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Bishop's Foreword

The historic pastoral role of the Church in the country has been a role of accompaniment and advocacy. Catholic colonists who landed in New England suffered harsh discrimination and political and economic exclusion. Through much of American history anti-Catholicism was nearly indistinguishable from anti-immigrant sentiment. After the Second World War, anti-Catholicism seemed to wane as more and more Catholics rose to power in economics, academics and in public office. Anti-immigration sentiment, however, continued to fester. Recent statistics show that this anti-immigrant sentiment is on the rise. As Catholics, we have both a historical and gospel mandate to support and care for immigrants. Our pastoral work must address the real needs of the people and it must be a collective effort of all our parishes and institutions, not just those parishes with immigrant populations. We are One Church born of One Baptism and formed together in One Spirit. Together in Christ we can find ways to attend to the needs of every person in need.

There are many ways that all our parishes and institutions can get involved. Please take the time to read this document and share it with parish leadership and staff.

Background

The Diocese of San Jose has been actively working with undocumented immigrants and refugees dating back to our establishment in 1981. Today our work in immigrant support is done in collaboration with Catholic Charities and neighborhood and community-based organizations. Our role as a Diocese has been as “convener” and “facilitator.” Most recently the Diocese has been active in developing a pastoral response to the challenge of imminent deportations

Through hundreds of personal interviews conducted by *Grupo Solidaridad*, LUNA, Sacred Heart Community Service, PACT and through consultation with the Diocesan Office of Catechetical Ministry, we have found a common theme: immigrants – regardless of their immigration status – are fearful and anxious. Undocumented immigrants report feelings of depression in themselves and their children; many undocumented parents do not leave the home or even answer the front door. When there is a report of an Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) action during the school day, many immigrants feel panicked because they cannot reach their children.

The immigrant community has turned to the Church for consolation *and* support. To the latter point, this document provides ways in which all parishes can do something to help their own parishioners and neighboring parishes’ parishioners. It is also a result of several months’ consultation with those directly affected by recent developments in immigration policy and those who serve the immigrant population, this document is the first step toward providing practical ways for all our parish and school communities to support our sisters and brothers.

This report is not a comprehensive plan, but rather a document that will hopefully complement existing parish plans that address the needs of immigrants and families in need.

Parishes as *Refugio*

The crisis facing the undocumented immigrant community requires a coordinated response. The good will of individuals and efforts of faith communities not connected to a network of communities is simply not enough to cover all the needs of persons facing imminent deportation. Some individuals will need monetary assistance, others may need legal advice, and some will need guidance in placing their children in homes of their choice. Today, the Diocese belongs to a coalition of service providers and community-based advocacy organizations that provide “Know Your Rights” workshops including helping parents to prepare for securing custody for their children, knowing what to say and to do in the case of an ICE integration, and organizing leadership within the immigrant community. We are also developing a rapid response network that will attend to the emergency needs of anyone who is being detained by ICE. Parishes and

schools may not be able to offer direct service, but they can provide essential support through volunteering at another parish, being part of a rapid response team, or helping to sustain the efforts of those who are working in communities through fundraising and collecting clothing, food and other necessities for families in crisis.

Organizational Chart for Parish Involvement



Catholic Refugio for Immigrants Project

Brief Description

Each parish is asked to take some role in the network of pastoral support. We recognize that parishes do not have ability to be all things to all people. Some parishes do not have many immigrants, but they have many parishioners who are interested in helping out in some way. Parishes like these are needed for support ministry. Other parishes may have people who are unclear about why the Diocese is helping undocumented persons and these parishes would benefit from having “Courageous Conversations,” a simple, yet profound, conversation series that helps people come to understand why we should get involved by opening up our hearts to our neighbors. Other parishes have many immigrants who need immediate support, but their staff and lay leadership needs training to manage effectively the many challenges that come from deportations. Below is a more descriptive explanation of each of the categories named above. While every parish will have some degree of each of these categories in their work, a parish may find itself identifying with more activities categorized under one of the three broad topics, “Social Change,” “Direct Contact” and “Support.”

“Refugios of Support”

“Refugios of Support” are parishes that may not have many immigrants as parishioners; yet the parish includes a lot of talented lay people who are willing to help out in family care ministry (caring for families that have lost a loved one to deportation), financial support (helping out to cover the costs associated with legal fees, help supplement a family’s income when a wage-earner in the family loses his or her job due to immigration issues; and have people in certain professions or with certain skills that would help immigrants who face deportation.

“Refugios of Social Change”

“Refugios of Social Change” are parishes with parishioner who are interested primarily in changing attitudes about immigrants and in shaping public policy to help bring about comprehensive immigration reform. While every parish would be influencing social and policy change to some degree, “Refugios of Social Change” will develop a relational model of advocacy and community organizing. Within this category of social change, some parishes in this category may wish to take on a more public role in the struggle for immigrant rights and have parishioners trained in non-violent resistance.

“Refugios of Direct Contact”

“Refugios of Direct Contact” are parishes that have daily contact with the immigrant population that is or may be targeted for deportation. These parish communities provide “Know Your Rights” and prepare families in the case of deportation workshops, they provide hospitality for those facing deportation and the staff and lay people have been trained to offer practical assistance to families in collaboration with community based agencies.

Brief Descriptions of Ministries

All parishes will be given training and support from the Solidarity Network (PACT and inter-faith leaders), the Office of Social Ministries, Catholic Charities and community-based organizations. Parishes may choose one or more of these ministries according to the organizational and managerial capacities of each parish community.

Financial Support: Funds raised will help to sustain a family in its time of crisis because they have found themselves without an income and also help to defray the cost of legal representation in immigration court.

Everyday Needs: When a family has undergone a traumatic change, they need people around them who can help them shop for necessities, or to share a meal or a cup of coffee to help “normalize” the situation.

Caretakers: A family in crisis may need help caring for members of the family who may need extra attention in a time of transition. Care takers are those who can watch for signs of stress and help direct families to trained professionals in the network of solidarity who can attend to the family’s needs.

Courageous Conversations: Using the model of “Living Room Conversations,” this ministry is a ministry of dialogue within the parish. In the interest of creating an atmosphere of unity, it is important that parishioners listen to each other. Immigration and deportation are not just issues of politics and public policy, they are personal. Courageous Conversations helps parishioners understand the immigration and deportations from the lens of the “Theology of Kinship.” (see support materials)

Advocacy: Working with the Diocesan Office of Social Ministries’ Projects for Justice and Peace and other community-based organizations, parishioners will be invited to engage public officials in conversation around issues that would help support immigrants. Advocacy will address immediate concerns as well as the longer-term campaign for comprehensive immigration reform.

Resistance Actions: Working with non-violent trainers within the network of supporters, parishioners will be trained in the techniques of non-violent resistance. Training will include creative non-violent resistance (resolving civic tensions, planning an action using non-violent principles), legal observation, and other actions that provoke thought and reflection.

Know Your Rights and Documentation Workshops: Parishes with large immigrant populations for many years have been providing space for community-based organizations to offer immigrant parishioners important information about immigration law, how to interact with ICE, and how they can best prepare their families. New elements to include in these workshops are: How to prepare legal custody for your children in the case of deportation and how to be a legal observer during an ICE action.

Resource Centers: Parish communities with a large number of immigrants have co-sponsored on-site services. Because the parish community is a trusted entity within the immigrant community, many immigrants go to the parish seeking help. The parish becomes a natural gathering spot for families in need. Partnering with trusted community based organizations, parishes would be able to be a conduit for delivering essential social services to families.

Refugio (Hospitality): In some rare cases, an individual may turn to the parish for a place to stay or an entire family may need some hospitality. While most parishes lack the resources to provide long term residency, an individual or family may simply need hospitality until things settle down for them and another space is made available. Parishes providing hospitality should be identified as hospitality-friendly so that other places or individuals that can handle a more permanent support situation can connect with an individual needing residency.

Pastoral Considerations

Keep the conversation on the personal and interpersonal level. We are talking about people, not policy.

- When we speak about undocumented immigrants, we should talk about *people* and *sisters and brothers* rather than creating a distinction between “us” and “them.” As we move forward, we should avoid using terms like “undocumented immigrants,” “illegal immigrants” or “illegal aliens.” We are, after all, talking about fellow parishioners who are woven deeply into the very fabric of our Church and neighborhoods.
- When we speak about people facing imminent deportation, we must keep the focus on the human cost of immigration *enforcement* policy. We must keep the focus on the effect of enforcement: the separation of families. Our pastoral task is to talk about the human reality: of how children feel when they leave for school not knowing if they will see their parents that evening and how a mother feels when she can no longer hold her children; of how spouses feel when they lose everything that they have built together in their many years of marriage.
- Our conversation is really a dialogue about the human condition, not about public policy. A dialogue in a pastoral context is about listening to the testimony of those directly affected and checking in with our feelings about what is happening in the life of another person. Our pastoral conversations are not about discussing the question of “legality” of one’s residential status.
- When we talk about public policy and the Church’s position on immigration, we must ground that conversation in the testimony of those directly affected and in the Gospel values of justice, charity and kinship. Our task as pastoral ministers is to facilitate a dialogue rather than to “teach” what the Church’s position is. There are some of our parishioners who do not agree with the Church’s position on immigration and we must listen to them as well. When people disagree with the Church’s position, we should try to understand “where they are coming from,” that is to say, we must understand the feelings and sentiments that have led them to hold onto a position that results in the separation of families. Above all, people need to know that our pastoral approach is about empathy that leads to acceptance and ultimately defense of the poor and vulnerable.
- Preachers and teachers should take care when publicly speaking about immigration and immigration policy. When we speak about policy, we should once again focus on the persons most directly affected. Remind your audience that the Church’s position on immigration is first and foremost a pastoral response that is consistent with our long history here in the United States.

- The best way to discuss public policy about immigration is in the context of small groups. Small group discussion allows for a more interpersonal approach, in which people can fully appreciate the story of immigrants facing imminent deportation and process their own feelings about what they are hearing. The Office of Social Ministry will be offering small group facilitator training for parishes that want to have “Courageous Conversations” about immigration.

When we offer direct service to immigrants facing imminent deportation, we must recognize that we are dealing with a population that is traumatized by actual incidents of interaction with ICE and potential threats.

- People facing deportation and the very real possibility of being separated from their loved ones are deeply traumatized. The trauma is manifested in many ways: personal stress that results in marital tension or bad behavior in school. People will expectedly turn to the Church for support. The support we can offer is prayer and a place of acceptance. We might also consider how we can help a family in other ways, such as social services.
- Many parishes may offer legal workshops to those who have the possibility of a legal remedy to their situation; resource fairs to help in prepare parents prepare guardianship of their children and the distribution of their assets in the case of sudden deportation; and what to do in case of an ICE action in their home, neighborhood or workplace. Parishes do not have to create curriculum for these workshops or resource fairs. The Office of Social Ministries is in partnership with multiple legal and community service organizations that are ready to present materials to the people. If your parish community is interested in scheduling a workshop or host a resource fair, contact one of the many community-based service organizations or the Office of Social Ministry.
- Another element of pastoral support is public affirmation. When people turn to the Church for support and help, another level of support is the public affirmation that the Church community is involved in the work of helping families. Parish communities may even speak about immigrant rights advocacy efforts, such as actions sponsored by PACT, IAF or other community organizing groups. Many parishes already announce opportunities for public advocacy by letting parishioners know how they as individuals can get involved in helping people in need.

When we speak about helping families who are facing imminent deportation, we should deliver a message of hope. We should remind people that our task is a task of accompaniment.

- We must be careful not to “over promise” that which is impossible to deliver. The question of “sanctuary” is one that immediately comes to mind. “Sanctuary” is a term that implies a condition of political protection from deportation. Some faith communities have declared themselves as “Sanctuary Churches” that will house individuals facing deportation on church property. When “sanctuary” in churches was declared in the 1980’s (popular efforts of providing shelter for Salvadoran political refugees facing deportation in the midst of the Salvadoran Civil War), there were no reported arrests of clergy participating in the Sanctuary Movement. Today; however, we are in a very different political context and there is no formal canonical or civil law protection for immigrants facing deportation who have taken up residence on church property. When a parish declares its space is a sanctuary for a person facing deportation, there is a very real possibility that an individual may be picked up regardless if the place of residence is on church property. Our primary pastoral task as Church is to provide a place where an individual can collect his or her wits and help them figure out what their next step might be. Providing a long-term temporary residence is not the only way, or even the best way, that we can show support for immigrants facing deportation.
- Since our focus is on the well-being and care of immigrants, we have chosen to focus on providing on-going support of family and loved ones left behind in the aftermath of deportation. Some parishes may choose to offer financial support to families who have lost everything due to an expedited removal. Some individuals may want to have direct contact with immigrants facing deportation. They may want to volunteer as caretakers or prayer-supporters for a family. Others may choose to be trained to be a member of a rapid response team or to be a legal observer at the time of a deportation. If your parish does not have a formal ministry to immigrants, but you have parish members interested in helping in this work, please have them contact the Office of Social Ministry directly.
- Several parishes in the diocese are already engaged in direct support with unhoused persons. At first many parishioners were apprehensive about helping the unhoused population, but after meeting people who were living in cars or along river beds, the parish community saw the situation from a new perspective and have become very supportive of the pastoral efforts to attend to the needs of the unhoused population. We believe that when parishioners experience direct contact with those who are facing imminent deportation, the congregation will find new purpose in their mission as Church and will be much more supportive of the issues that many persons who are facing immigration.

Support Material: Attachment 1

Catechetical Backgrounder

Principles, Values and Pastoral Priorities in the Case of Offering Refuge to Immigrants Persons on Catholic Property

The following principles are from the United States Bishops' pastoral letter, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope":

- **People have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.**
- **People have the right to migrated to support themselves and their families.**
- **Sovereign nations have a right to control their borders.**
- **Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.**
- **The human rights and dignity of undocumented migrants should be respected.**

Making a Case for Making Room in our Parish for Immigrant Families Facing Imminent Deportation

The Catechism of the Catholic Church affirms the unbreakable bond between children and their parents. Immigration laws and the enforcement of policies that would result in the separation of children from their parents and spouses from each other must be opposed.

The family has a privileged place in society and is the fundamental building block of society. Civil authority must therefore recognize that the family as an institution must be protected.

The Catechism states, #2202, "A man and a woman united in marriage, together with their children, form a family. This institution is prior to any recognition by public authority, which has an obligation to recognize it. It should be considered the normal reference point by which the different forms of family relationship are to be evaluated."

The Church also teaches that the state has an obligation to be sure that families can care for their members. Based on this teaching, the Church opposes the actions of the state that would result in frustrating the ability of the family to care for each other. **Separation of families by deportation and indeterminate detention must be opposed.**

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

#2208 “The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor. There are many families who are at times incapable of providing this help. It devolves then on other persons, other families, and, in a subsidiary way, society to provide for their needs: “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world.” #2209, “The family must be helped and defended by appropriate social measures. Where families cannot fulfill their responsibilities, other social bodies have the duty of helping them and of supporting the institution of the family. Following the principle of subsidiarity, larger communities should take care not to usurp the family's prerogatives or interfere in its life.” #2210, “The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society¹³ entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family. Civil authority should consider it a grave duty “to acknowledge the true nature of marriage and the family, to protect and foster them, to safeguard public morality, and promote domestic prosperity.” #2237, “Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They will dispense justice humanely by respecting the rights of everyone, especially of families and the disadvantaged.”

The body politic - that is, the people - have a duty to help promote the well-being of the family. It is therefore acceptable for the faithful, as a member of the body politic, to engage in political actions that would maintain the unity and well-being of the family.

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

#2211 “211 The political community has a duty to honor the family, to assist it, and to ensure especially:

- the freedom to establish a family, have children, and bring them up in keeping with the family's own moral and religious convictions;
- the protection of the stability of the marriage bond and the institution of the family;
- the freedom to profess one's faith, to hand it on, and raise one's children in it, with the necessary means and institutions;

- the right to private property, to free enterprise, to obtain work and housing, and the right to emigrate;
- in keeping with the country's institutions, the right to medical care, assistance for the aged, and family benefits;
- the protection of security and health, especially with respect to dangers like drugs, pornography, alcoholism, etc.;
- ...the freedom to form associations with other families and so to have representation before civil authority.”

In the context of American politics, political engagement is not only about voting, it is also taking public action, illustrated in civil disobedience in the “Boston Tea Party” incident. That act of civil disobedience served the common good of the colonies that sought full participation in their own lives. Likewise, **certain political acts – such as offering refuge to those seeking to live out a fundamental right of being a family – might also be considered an act of civil disobedience, but would not be in conflict with the principles of full, active and conscious participation in promoting what we believe to be a fundamental right: the right to live as a family.**

We must participate in our society in a political way consistent with the Common Good.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

#1913 "Participation" is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person.

#1914 Participation is achieved first of all by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes personal responsibility: by the care taken for the education of his family, by conscientious work, and so forth, man participates in the good of others and of society.³¹

#1915 As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life. The manner of this participation may vary from one country or culture to another. "One must pay tribute to those nations whose systems permit the largest possible number of the citizens to take part in public life in a climate of genuine freedom."³²

At times our “social partners” (in this case, the State) must “convert” to realize the common good and the well-being of the family. **We are ethically charged with challenging the broken system of immigration policy.**

#1916 As with any ethical obligation, the participation of all in realizing the common good calls for a continually renewed conversion of the social partners. Fraud and other subterfuges, by which some people evade the constraints of the law and the prescriptions of societal obligation, must be firmly condemned because they are incompatible with the requirements of justice. Much care should be taken to promote institutions that improve the conditions of human life.

Additional Resources for parishes on the USCCB Website

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/catholic-teaching-on-immigration-and-the-movement-of-peoples.cfm>

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/churchteachingonimmigrationreform.cfm>

Support Materials: Attachment 2

Social Justice Backgrounder

Social Justice Primer

The locus of social change is in the “social,” which means, all change begins with us being in right relationship to others. “Right relationship” means that the three dimensions of our personhood (social, economic and political) are in alignment with the conditions of freedom and liberty for the purpose of achieving the well-being of the common good. Social Justice is *not* the freedom and liberty in which we achieve personal gain. Lastly, Pope Francis has enriched our understanding of social justice to include right relationship with the created order. Thus, “common good” is not understood by what benefits our species alone. Common good must be understood as what is beneficial for the *entire social system of human person which includes other species and the environment*.

Right relationship for the common good in the social dimension includes the following conditions: we are not coerced by others to do something; that we are free to move about from one place to the next, to form interpersonal relationships with others, and to fully participate in society. The social dimension also includes the right to adequate housing, healthcare and the pursuit of education and care for the planet and other species.

The second dimension of right relationship in pursuit of the common good is “economic.” The economic dimension includes the freedom to organize into unions in the workplace, to have equal access to economic advancement, and that we are compensated justly, meaning that the wage we receive in exchange for our labors allows us to live in a dignified manner. Personal economic gain must also correspond to the well-being of all and that economic advancement is not limited to a few privileged persons, but that the economic gain is fairly distributed so that all who are engaged in the work share in the economic gain. Economic advancement cannot come at the expense of ecological degradation or at the cost of another species’ survival.

The last dimension of right relationship, political, means that we have a right to participate in public affairs that directly affect our lives and our community. Right relationship in the political dimension also includes the right to assemble, to voice dissent, to form political associations, all for the purpose of achieving the common good. The political dimension

includes the obligation of human beings to govern in a way that will preserve the environment and preserve natural resources for future generations.

In short, justice is the work of preserving the three dimensions of our personhood by establishing the conditions in which a right relationship between our self, our neighbor and the environment is not only possible, but encouraged. The role of the State (establishment of government and laws) is to provide the means by which right relationship in pursuit of the common good flourishes.

Support Material: Attachment 3

Theology of Kinship

Word, Worship and Witness

Belief (what we profess in doctrine), prayer (what we pray in liturgy) and action (what we do in the world) are the three essential tasks of the Church. The Word is handed down to us in Scripture and Tradition. The Sacred Liturgy gathers the community together to embody the Living Word. And public ministry is work of living our faith in the world. When we put our faith into action, we are living out the third of these essential tasks: Witness. These three tasks are inseparable from one another: what we believe informs how we pray and how we pray and what we believe informs us on how we should act in the world. Likewise, how we act in the world should inform the manner of our worship and contribute to the development of our understanding of what we profess.

When we read in Scripture that God calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves and when we gather together as the Body of Christ in prayer, we are declaring that we are kin, or family, to one another; however, if our actions do not reflect kinship by the way we treat others, then there is something terribly wrong with our faith. Faith is not solely a matter of giving intellectual assent to doctrine nor a matter of private piety. Faith demands action. The theology of kinship helps us understand the relationship between the call to love our neighbor not only in word, but also in deed.

The theology of kinship is grounded in the act of creation and our baptism.

We begin with the premise that God is our Father, that is, God is the origin of all creation. The blessing of water in our baptismal ritual recasts the creation story in Genesis to include the breath of the Spirit (*Ruah*) hovering over the primordial waters of creation. God's breath - the *Ruah* - generated movement in creation and established all things in relationship to each other. God's Spirit is given to the baptized to re-enforce the bond of connection not only to God and the Church but also to all creation, "...to go out and baptize all the nations..." In other words, the Holy Spirit binds us to the world around us, as well as to our neighbor.

The theology of kinship makes ethical demands.

God created us to love one another and preserve the well-being of creation. When God gave humanity "dominion" over creation (Genesis 1:26), it was not so that humankind could

dominate others. Pope Francis says our “dominion” should be more properly understood as “responsible stewardship” (*Laudato si*, 116). Toward that end, the pope urges us to change our behavior. He calls on us to go out and serve “above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, ‘those who cannot repay you’ (Lk 14:14)” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 48). He calls on us “to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing” (*Laudato si*, 9). We are called continually to praise to God for the gift of creation and to serve God by maintaining the order of kinship between ourselves and creation. We are kin to one another; we are kin to the cosmos.

When we fall out of kinship, we are called to repent, convert, and make amends.

Kinship is not easy; it is hard work. When we fall out of kinship with another person — that is, when we mistreat others or the environment — then we must acknowledge that we have broken the kinship of love. To restore the broken relationship is a process of conversion and reconciliation. We cannot simply say, “I am sorry” to an individual because the wound is not limited to a single person. We must also recognize and begin to heal the tear we have caused in the fabric of relationships that are established through kinship. When we mistreat another person, we damage the common good. To be truly sorry, we must repent of our selfish ways within three areas of common good: society, the economy, and the political realm. We must promise to change our ways and work to restore all areas of our kinship with one another and the world.

“. . . [W]e have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate the questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (*Laudato si*, #49).

Kinship Shapes the Pastoral Life of the Church.

Our pastoral life is enriched when we can look more intentionally at the relationship between faith, prayer and social action. As members of the Body of Christ, we are family to one another and we cannot reduce faith to proclamations or warm feelings. Our understanding of faith must always include living out that which we profess in word and in our worship. Our political behavior, therefore, should reflect what we profess in Sacred Scripture and publicly celebrate in liturgy. When we maintain *lex credendi*, *lex orandi* in the context of kinship, we will come to see that the Church’s pastoral life should not only embrace the immigrant but also actively advocate for our sister and brother’s protection and address the social, economic and political contexts that negatively impact his or her life.