

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELIGIOUS LEADERS LAUNCH NEW IMMIGRATION REFORM CAMPAIGN *Together as Brothers and Sisters* Campaign Announced by Priests for Justice for Immigrants and the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants

Chicago, IL (April 11, 2013) – Priests for Justice for Immigrants, a group of more than 200 priests, and the Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, a network of over 180 sisters and brothers representing 59 religious orders, along with immigrant families and native-born supporters, gathered at Holy Name Cathedral today to launch the ***Together as Brothers and Sisters*** campaign. This launch, part of a series of ongoing activities coordinated by the Archdiocese of Chicago’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Immigration Education, aims to bring attention to the urgency of comprehensive immigration reform.

The ***Together as Brothers and Sisters*** campaign reaffirms the Church’s commitment to support comprehensive immigration reform that provides a path to citizenship, preserves family unity, provides a pathway for low-skilled immigrant workers to come and work in the United States, restores due process protections to our immigration enforcement policies, and addresses the root causes of migration.

Francis Cardinal George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago, issued a statement that underscored the need for urgent immigration reform that focuses on family unity by opposing separation of families and deportation. Most Rev. John R. Manz and Most Rev. Joseph N. Perry, Auxiliary Bishops of Chicago, introduced the statement by the Cardinal and highlighted the work that the Archdiocese has done throughout the years with immigrants and their families. “The need for immigration reform is not only about what immigrants can contribute to this country, it is also about compassion and understanding of the importance of keeping families together,” said Bishop Manz. “We must not lose sight of the teachings of the Bible that encourage us to welcome the stranger.”

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“Hundreds of thousands of families are being separated, entire communities continue to live in fear, and after years of advocating for solutions, Congress has made very little progress,” said Rev. Donald J. Nevins, pastor of St. Agnes of Bohemia Parish in Chicago and a member of Priests for Justice for Immigrants. “Today, we are renewing our efforts to bring more support from our parishioners, communities of faith, and elected officials for legislation that is compassionate, just, and keeps families together.”

Participants at the campaign launch included a family affected by the broken immigration system, who spoke about the reality of living in the shadows and the fear of separation. A DREAMer also spoke about the need for comprehensive solutions that will not only fix his immigration status but will provide a pathway to citizenship for his whole family. He also invited the public to join the ***Together as Brothers and Sisters*** campaign in social media outlets, including the [Office for Immigrant Affairs Facebook page](#) that includes the latest information on actions for immigration reform and the Twitter account where users can share their personal commitments to help advance immigration reform by following **@2getherbrosis** and typing **#icommit**.

Also during the campaign launch, Sister Rose Therese Nolta, SSpS, member of Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants, announced their plans to push for immigration reform. Sr. Nolta described the actions they have committed to do that include praying and fasting for legislative action and for elected officials; conducting “calling days” to legislators to encourage them to enact compassionate immigration reform; writing letters to editors on the need for immigration reform; and promoting a postcard campaign in their communities. “We are fully committed to do what is in our power to bring attention to the need for urgent solutions for the broken immigration system,” said Sister Nolta. “Families are suffering, children are being separated from their parents, and immigrants are in detention centers waiting for deportation! These actions are the least we can do to keep these families together and to get the message to those that need to hear it.”

The members of Priests for Justice for Immigrants also committed to act for immigration reform. Rev. Lawrence R. Dowling, pastor of St. Agatha Parish, spoke about the work priests will do in their parishes and why it is needed. “This campaign shows the importance for communities of faith to get involved in the fight for immigration reform,” said Fr. Dowling. “Since 2005, we have been accompanying immigrants with education and legislative actions in our parishes, but this spring we

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are intensifying our efforts. We stand in solidarity with those affected by the broken immigration system and make a call to Congress to move forward with legislation that upholds the dignity of immigrants, protects their basic human rights, and preserves family unity.”

Priests for Justice for Immigrants committed to preach on Sundays from April to June to support immigration reform, invite DREAMers to share stories of their journeys with the parish congregations, publish bulletin articles linking faith to legislative action, include Prayers of the Faithful for immigration reform, and engage parishes in the postcard campaign with the goal to collect 100,000 postcards by June 2013.

In addition, participants announced key upcoming events including:

- “The Plight for Immigrant Workers” - a conference that will take place on Saturday, April 20, from 8:30 a.m until 12:30 p.m. at North Lawndale College Prep Collins Campus, 1313 S. Sacramento Blvd., Chicago, organized by Sisters and Brothers of Immigrants.
- Pilgrimage on Thursday, May 30, beginning simultaneously from three Chicago locations at 6 p.m.: Old St. Patrick’s, 700 West Adams Street, St. Adalbert, 1650 West 17th Street, and Notre Dame de Chicago, 1334 West Flournoy, to Holy Family Parish, 1080 West Roosevelt, Chicago, where Cardinal George will conduct a prayer service in support of immigration reform at 7:30 p.m.

Additional events and actions will take place throughout April, May, June and until comprehensive immigration reform legislation is passed in Congress.

Since May 2005, the Archdiocese of Chicago, its bishops, priests and religious congregations, have been a voice for immigrants through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform/Justice for Immigrants*, established to educate Catholics and the general public about the need for comprehensive immigration reform and to influence legislation for a permanent and fair solution to immigration issues in this country. The ***Together as Brothers and Sisters*** campaign will join with the USCCB’s *Justice for Immigrants*, to highlight the urgency for new immigration reform legislation.

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For more information about the campaign, these events and other immigration efforts of the Archdiocese of Chicago, visit www.archchicago.org/immigration, or contact Elena Segura, Director of the Office for Immigrant Affairs and Immigration Education at 312-307-6180 or esegura@archchicago.org.

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