

# Catholic Conference of Ohio

## BACKGROUND ON IMMIGRATION REFORM

Immigration reform has stalled at the federal level. There remains great divisiveness both within the legislature and throughout the community. Our immigrant outreach workers report an increase in prejudice and incidents of violence towards many Ohio immigrant workers. There is much fear throughout our Hispanic communities. The heightened enforcement practices have resulted in abusive profiling, insensitive treatment of family members, and increased reports of workplace injustice.

There is a need in Ohio for:

- Greater civility, thoughtful discussion and prayerful reflection regarding societal attitudes and approaches toward immigrant workers. Immigrant workers provide important and necessary contributions to the common good of our state through the work they perform and the taxes they pay;
- A recommitment to the vision and goals expressed in the 2001 Ohio Bishops' pastoral statement, *God's Welcoming Presence: A Call to Stand in Solidarity with Ohio's Immigrants*;
- Our Catholic community to continue being a source of spiritual strength, neighborly love, refuge and vocal advocacy for the dignity and human needs of immigrants;
- Congressional delegates to urgently persist in the passage of federal comprehensive reform based upon the principles developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Such reform should include a more workable *guest worker* program and provide a viable path to citizenship for current immigrant workers;
- An end to harassment, violence, and unnecessary raids. Immigrant workers are NOT more of a security and safety threat to Ohioans than other persons;
- Praying the *Justice Prayer* developed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants Program.

### The Justice Prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit!

Come, open us to the wonder, beauty, and dignity of the diversity found in each culture, in each face, and in each experience we have of the other among us.

Come, fill us with generosity as we are challenged to let go and allow others to share with us the goods and beauty of earth.

Come; heal the divisions that keep us from seeing the face of Christ in all men, women, and children.

Come, free us to stand with and for those who must leave their own lands in order to find work, security, and welcome in a new land, one that has enough to share.

Come, bring us understanding, inspiration, wisdom, and the courage needed to embrace change and stay on the journey.

Come, O Holy Spirit, show us the way.