



December 29, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

May the peace of our Lord be with you this Christmas season.

We, the Bishops of Washington State, stand with our brothers and sisters who are immigrants and refugees. The threats of mass deportations and forced separation of families have caused great fear for refugees and migrants and their families – documented and undocumented. These threats are contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the dignity of every human person that is central to the teachings of our Catholic faith.

In his encyclical letter *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis reminds us, “If every human being possesses an inalienable dignity, if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbor was born in my country or elsewhere” (#55).

While we uphold that we are a nation of laws, as we’ve stated in the past, we also know that the U.S. immigration system is severely flawed and in need of a comprehensive overhaul. As Christians we know our love for God is measured by our love of neighbor, particularly the most vulnerable. Rooted in Scripture, the Catholic Church has a long tradition of standing with those forced to migrate, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35). Therefore, we cannot separate our love for God from our love for others, as we echo Pope Francis’ call to welcome, protect, promote and integrate immigrants (*Fratelli Tutti* 129).

Even the Statue of Liberty reminds us that migration is part of the fabric of our nation, with a line from Emma Lazarus, a Jewish-American immigrant author, engraved on its pedestal: “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.”

During this time of uncertainty and fear, we stand with our immigrant and refugee brothers and sisters. May all our brothers and sisters on the margins, especially migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, know that our parishes are open for prayer, comfort and solace. May each of us embrace the Gospel teaching and Pope Francis’ call to recognize the dignity of others as we welcome the stranger.

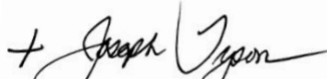
As pilgrims of hope entering into a Jubilee year, we journey together through these uncertain times knowing Our Lady of Guadalupe walks with us.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us!

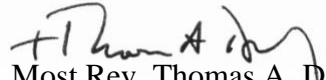
In the Heart of Christ,



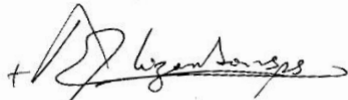
Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne
Archbishop of Seattle



Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima



Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly
Bishop of Spokane



Most Rev. Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S.
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle



Most Rev. Frank Schuster
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle