



# MINNESOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis ♦ Diocese of Crookston ♦ Diocese of Duluth  
Diocese of New Ulm ♦ Diocese of St. Cloud ♦ Diocese of Winona

December 22, 2006

As the Catholic Bishops of the State of Minnesota, we are distressed and disheartened by the work place raids that took place in Worthington, Minnesota and other communities this past week. To add insult to injury, immigration officials chose the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patron saint of the Americas, as the day to target these workers and their families.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers justified these raids as part of their investigation of a large-scale identity theft scheme. In fact, few of the workers arrested at the Swift plant in Worthington were charged as perpetrators of the identity theft scheme.

The U.S. and Mexican Catholic bishops have called for an overhaul of the U.S. immigration system. Criteria for reform include:

- a broad-based earned legalization program (permanent residency) for the undocumented of all nationalities;
- a reform of our family-based immigration system to allow family members to reunite with loved ones in the United States;
- a reform of the employment-based immigration system to provide legal pathways for migrants to come and work in a safe, humane and orderly manner; and,
- a restoration of due process protections for immigrants.

The raids did nothing to advance needed reform. Instead, the raids heartlessly divided families, disrupted the whole community of Worthington and undermined progress that that city had made toward bridging racial and cultural differences.

We call for an end to such raids which violate the rights of workers and the dignity of work. These men and women are our brothers and sisters; as workers, they provide our food; as residents, they support our local businesses and communities. We must always remember that their dignity as human beings must be foremost in our thinking as we address the critical issues surrounding immigration. Our faith calls us to overcome all forms of discrimination and violence so that we may build relationships that are just and loving.

Comprehensive immigration reform, including a broad legalization program, should be a policy priority when Congress meets in the new year.

Archbishop Harry Flynn  
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Bishop John Nienstedt  
Diocese of New Ulm

Bishop Richard Pates  
Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Bishop John Kinney  
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Bishop Victor Balke  
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Bishop Dennis Schnurr  
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