



Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

Please read at all Masses on the weekend of February 4-5, 2017.

February 4, 2017

My Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In November of last year at the General Assembly of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I was elected chair of the Committee on Migration. Since taking on this new responsibility, I have become even more aware of the need for immigration reform. ***I fully support a comprehensive reform that will strengthen the security of Americans, without losing sight of those fleeing violence and conflict in various regions of the world.*** I support reform that is safe for refugees and for the communities that welcome them.

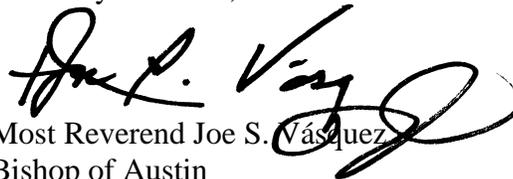
Unfortunately, the President's recent Executive Order on refugee resettlement falls short as it hurts those who need help. The United States has long provided leadership in resettling refugees. Today, with more than 65 million people from around the world being forcibly displaced from their homes, there is an urgent need to assist refugees and provide freedom from persecution.

People of goodwill, especially those in government leadership, should ensure that refugees, regardless of their religious belief, are compassionately welcomed without sacrificing our security or values as Americans. These refugees are the very ones Jesus referred to as the least of our brothers and sisters among us. They, too, are children of God and are entitled to be treated with human dignity.

As I travel the Diocese of Austin, I have met many parishioners who tell me they are refugees or children of refugees who left their country fleeing violence and persecution. They now consider Central Texas their home – a place of solace and security.

I invite all people of Central Texas to join me in praying and working for the common good and the sacred human dignity of every person.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin