



# Statement on migration

## Feast of St. Joseph the Worker

### May 1, 2024

On this feast day of St. Joseph the Worker, we want you to know of our concern for the health and safety of all migrants and their families, no less than the other residents of our state. Pope Francis has said that chapter 25 of Matthew's Gospel, which calls us to welcome the stranger, is "a constant admonition to see in the migrant not simply a brother or sister in difficulty, but Christ himself, who knocks at our door." We are ready to serve in accordance with our sincerely held religious beliefs, following the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The situation at the southern border has engendered fear and a resolution by many to look for local solutions. At the state level, we have opposed migration enforcement measures such as SF 2340 because they place a disproportionate emphasis on punitive sanctions, undermine family unity, reduce humanitarian protections, and provide no viable solutions for long-time residents without legal status. Nor can the State of Iowa simply "remove" people to another sovereign nation without that country's permission.

It is especially problematic that SF 2340 would explicitly allow state officials to prosecute an individual for state immigration crimes, even if that person's application for immigration relief is pending before federal authorities or they have actually received federal authorization to be present. Further, state and local officials have little training in interpreting federal immigration law. We ask officials to ensure the protection of human rights and dignity of the persons involved. Families should receive special consideration and not be separated.

We also express our solidarity with Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso and the Texas bishops, who insist that the dignity of migrants be respected while our country exercises its right to maintain its borders.

While Catholics may disagree within the limits of justice on the specific approach to reforming the immigration system, we ask lawmakers in Washington, D.C., to resist easy answers and do their job. As the Iowa Catholic Conference said decades ago, we again ask for "border protection policies that are consistent with humanitarian values and with the need to treat all individuals with respect, while allowing the authorities to carry out the critical task of identifying and preventing entry of terrorists and dangerous criminals."

As we remember our history as immigrants in Iowa, let us work together towards a fair and compassionate resolution of our challenges with migration.



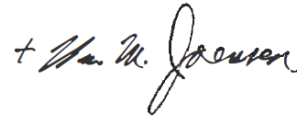
Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula  
Archbishop of Dubuque



Very Rev. Kenneth Kuntz  
Diocesan Administrator, Diocese of  
Davenport



Most Rev. R. Walker Nickless  
Bishop of Sioux City



Most Rev. William Joensen  
Bishop of Des Moines