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Statement

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Archbishop John C. Wester

Truly, I say to you,

as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me. Matthew 25:40

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Friday, November 18, 2016- IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Archbishop John C. Wester has issued the following statement:

The recent presidential election turned out to be a surprise, with a majority of voters suddenly disappointed and a large number suddenly delighted. Nonetheless, it is my hope that Americans voted their conscience, seeking what is best for the good of our country and, I hope, for the common good of all, whether within or beyond our borders. It is also my hope we can work together with the new administration to fulfill the hopes and dreams of our fellow citizens. Unless proven otherwise, I presume President-elect Donald J. Trump will dedicate himself to the well-being of all our fellow citizens and the well-being of those in the global community. His successful presidency, dedicated to serving all people, will be a success for all.

At the same time, I am aware of many people in our archdiocese who are fearful of what may happen to them, given the hurtful and sometimes hateful things that have been said during the recent campaign. In particular, there is a real fear that thousands of youth and young adults who received temporary relief from deportation through the executive action on immigration by President Obama called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) will be repealed and many of our brothers and sisters will be deported, thus separating them from their families. Given this fear, I want to assure all our people that we in the archdiocese support and advocate for our recent arrivals and for those who are here and do not have a way to obtain a legal pathway to reside in this country. We acknowledge our immigration laws are no longer adequate to meet the needs of our country and of our immigrants. Furthermore, we know that so many of our immigrants are fleeing persecution, extreme poverty and in many cases, certain death at the hands of criminal cartels, gangs, drug dealers, and human traffickers. We cannot and will not abandon them. We must speak out clearly on their behalf, working with our government officials to implement comprehensive immigration reform, giving special attention to those who have rightful asylum claims.

Attention must also be given to those groups who have been singled out for suspicion such as our Muslim immigrants. We have a very dynamic and supportive relationship with them and must assure them of our support, especially given some of the ugly displays of bigotry that have surfaced since the election.

As Catholics, we need to continue to speak clearly in the public square, echoing the voice of the Gospel that challenges us to love our neighbor as ourselves, giving special attention to those who are living on the periphery. During this time of transition, I encourage all Catholics to practice “deliberate civility”, modeling for others in our words and deeds, our fundamental belief that all people have been made in the image and likeness of God. Each person we encounter is due our respect, even if we do not agree with their views.

I ask you to join me in prayer for the future of our nation, for President-elect Trump and for all our elected leaders that they may focus on the needs of our nation and world. May we trust in God as we focus on coming together as a nation and healing all wounds of division, that our nation and the world can look forward to a bright and peaceful future.

Most Rev. John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe--END