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**Immigration Statement  
From Most Reverend John C. Wester  
Archbishop of Santa Fe  
January 21, 2025**

Albuquerque, New Mexico – Tuesday, January 21, 2025– IMMEDIATE RELEASE – The following is a statement from Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe on immigration:

As we usher in a new administration in our country, let us pray for a future grounded in the common good, a nation united in solidarity, and a deep respect for the sanctity of each individual and the dignity of every worker.

In light of recent news, I feel a profound obligation to speak on behalf of immigrants. The United States owes much to immigrants since they first came to our shores as they beheld the Statue of Liberty. Addressing our broken immigration system is a complex and formidable challenge that has perplexed our nation for decades. Unfortunately, many leaders propose overly simplistic solutions: either tending toward open borders or sealing them shut. Neither approach is viable. We need comprehensive, insightful, and effective immigration reform.

The heart of this complex issue lies in the fact that it concerns human beings, each created in the image of God with inherent dignity. We must not treat them as mere pawns in a game of chess nor politicize them. Instead, we must place their needs and concerns at the forefront of our debates, considering both the citizens of our nation and those seeking refuge at our borders. Our Christian faith urges us to care for the resident and the stranger.

We cannot ignore the plight of immigrants facing dire situations in their home countries. Not long ago, Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso and I visited Tegucigalpa, where we visited with a family whose home was riddled with bullets because their son would not join a gang. Their story is emblematic of the dire situation so many immigrants find themselves in as they are victimized by criminal cartels, drug traffickers, human traffickers, and the intolerable conditions brought about by economic and political injustice.

At the same time, we must consider the concerns of our fellow citizens while not succumbing to false narratives. The truth is that immigrants are a benefit to our country. They help the economy by increasing the labor force, creating jobs, and boosting productivity. It is a fact that immigrants are often among the most law-abiding, religious, hardworking, and community-minded individuals in our country. They have a lower incarceration rate than the native-born population, and research shows that as the immigration population grows, the crime rate declines.

Let us remember that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were once forced immigrants in Egypt, fleeing from Herod. Immigrants have already played a crucial role in making America great. Now, it is our responsibility to sustain that greatness by coming together in a bipartisan effort to enact immigration reform that honors both citizens and immigrants, addressing the intricate issues at hand. Mass deportation is not the answer. Thoughtful, bipartisan and prudent comprehensive immigration reform is what our country deserves and what our immigrant brothers and sisters need.

As Catholics, we firmly believe that all human beings are children of God, brothers and sisters created in God's image. It is imperative that we reassess how we treat our fellow humans, both within our borders and beyond. Please join me in praying that our country responds to the current immigration crisis in a manner that reflects Gospel values by managing our borders wisely and, at the same time, providing for those who are looking for a home where they can find life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

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