



**OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**  
***Most Reverend John E. Kehner***  
**DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY**  
**1821 Jackson Street**  
**Sioux City, IA 51105**

February 4, 2026

**A Pastoral Letter to the Faithful of the Diocese**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace be with you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In recent months, our nation has witnessed renewed tension surrounding immigration enforcement. Many of our immigrant brothers and sisters—some of whom worship beside us each Sunday, whose children learn in our schools, and whose hands labor quietly to sustain our communities—are living with profound fear and uncertainty. As their shepherd, I cannot remain silent when members of our human family suffer.

I wish to reiterate the messages released previously from the [Iowa Catholic Bishops](#)\* and the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)\* regarding immigration and the dignity of the human person.

The Church has long taught that every person, regardless of nationality or legal status, possesses an inherent dignity given by God. Scripture reminds us that we, too, are called to welcome the stranger, protect the vulnerable, and uphold justice rooted in mercy. These values are not abstract ideals; they are concrete demands of discipleship.

For this reason, I urge all people of goodwill to stand in solidarity with immigrant families who contribute so much to the life of our parishes and communities. Many are fleeing violence, poverty or instability. Many are parents seeking safety for their children. Many are already woven into the fabric of our parishes and neighborhoods. Their hopes are not foreign to us but rather mirror the hopes of every family striving for a better life.

I encourage policymakers to pursue responsible, comprehensive immigration reform that is orderly, just and compassionate, provides clarity rather than chaos and reflects the values we profess as a nation.

To the faithful of the diocese, I ask you to pray fervently for all migrants and refugees, for those entrusted with public office and for our communities as we navigate these challenges. I also invite you to accompany immigrant families with concrete acts of support such as offering friendship, advocating for humane policies and ensuring that our parishes remain places of welcome.

May the Holy Spirit guide us toward a society where justice and mercy meet, and where every person is treated as a beloved child of God.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read '+John E. Keehner'.

Most Rev. John E. Keehner  
Bishop, Diocese of Sioux City

\*<https://lumenmedia.org/news/iowa-bishops-release-reflection-on-immigration-human-dignity>

\*\*<https://lumenmedia.org/news/bishops-issue-special-message-on-immigration>