



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESS RELEASE

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Bishop issues statement on executive order

**Statement on the occasion of the issue of the
Executive Order “Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements”
of President Trump**

**By Bishop Richard E. Pates
Diocese of Des Moines**

I join the voice of Bishop Joe Vasquez, Chair of the Committee of Migration and Refugees for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, by stating that I am very disheartened by the action of President Trump in prioritizing building a wall on the Mexican-U.S. border.

Bishop Vasquez stated: “. . . my brother bishops and I will continue to follow the example of Pope Francis. We will ‘look to build bridges between people, bridges that allow us to break down the walls of exclusion and exploitation.’”

Bishop Vasquez further stated: “The announced increase in immigration detention space and immigration enforcement activities is alarming. It will tear families apart and spark fear and panic in communities. While we respect the rights of our federal government to control our borders and ensure security for all Americans, we do not believe that a large scale escalation of immigrant detention and intensive increased use of enforcement in immigrant communities is the way to achieve those goals. Instead, we remain firm in our commitment to comprehensive, compassionate and common-sense reform.”

I have been personally informed, in the present immigration context, of many people in our community living in fear, families who are struggling to maintain stability and family life, and

children being traumatized in our schools. As the shepherd of all of our people of Catholic faith, I assure those under present threat that they will not be abandoned by me or the Diocese of Des Moines. They can be assured of my loyalty and support.

Included with this release is a statement from Bishop Pates issued Dec. 12, 2016 on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in English and Spanish. A copy of this statement in Spanish will be shared shortly.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 80 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.