

DIOCESE OF ORANGE



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BISHOP OF ORANGE VOICES SUPPORT FOR COMPASSIONATE AND COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM AT PENTECOST CELEBRATION

This annual ritual honors the Holy Spirit and marks the beginning of the church's mission in the world

ORANGE, Calif., (June 2, 2006) – The Most Rev. Tod D. Brown, Bishop of Orange, will celebrate Pentecost and voice his support for amiable and comprehensive immigration reform at Holy Family Cathedral, Sunday, June 4, at 3:00 p.m. Pentecost is the celebration of the descent of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised would come to His followers after His ascension to heaven. Bishop Brown is taking this most holy of occasions to urge the United States Congress to work together to reconcile their respective immigration reform bills in a manner that respects human dignity and keeps families united.

“This glorious celebration recognizes the gift of the Holy Spirit, realizing that God’s very life, breath and energy lives within us. Pentecost is the anniversary of the Christian church, and the beginning of the church's mission to the world. I am blessed on this occasion to recognize the positive strides the U.S. Senate has made toward equitable and comprehensive immigration reform. We as Catholics are called by Christ to welcome the stranger among us and offer them hospitality and fidelity,” said Bishop Brown.

Diocese of Orange Bishops Brown, Luong and Soto stand with their brother Bishops in the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as the legislative processes moves forward. The USCCB advocates that the Senate and House of Representatives

work together to either remove or restructure the callous enforcement provisions found in both the House and Senate legislation. In addition, Congress is encouraged to streamline the path to citizenship for the undocumented in this country. It is important that Congress maintain a practical and just temporary worker program that includes an option to petition for permanent residency, as well as to make changes to our family-based immigration system to reduce the waiting time for families to be reunited. Ultimately, the U.S. bishops' continued support for immigration reform legislation requires a workable and viable path to citizenship for the undocumented, significant backlog reductions for family-based visas, and a viable temporary workers program that protects both U.S. and foreign-born workers.

The late John Paul II was a tireless advocate on behalf of immigrants and refugees. His words to us in 1995 still carry a moral urgency for us today:

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matthew 25:35) Today the illegal migrant comes before us like that 'stranger' in whom Jesus asks to be recognized. To welcome him and to show him solidarity is a duty of hospitality and fidelity to Christian identity itself." -Pope John Paul II, Annual Message for World Migration Day, 1995.

For more information on the Roman Catholic Church's teaching on the issue of immigration reform please visit: www.justiceforimmigrants.org .

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