

Pastoral Responses to Immigration Reform

Here are suggestions of how you and your parish can engage in pastoral and political action around immigration reform. You will find three tiers, reflecting different levels and types of engagement. Build up, try at least one from each. In any case, act!

First Tier Next Steps (Easy: High Impact)

1. **Prayers of the Faithful.** Include in your prayers of the faithful, an intercession inviting us to remember the undocumented, legislators, and Catholic consciences in our prayers.¹
2. **Homilies.** Make it a point to mention aspects of the readings that touch on and can relate to the issue of immigration, the undocumented, how we treat the least among us.²
3. Encourage parishioners to be further **formed in Catholic Social Teaching around the issue of Immigration**, including availing themselves of the excellent materials at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.
4. Invite someone to **share an immigration story, or a personal experience as an undocumented resident** in your parish, after communion.

Second Tier Next Steps (Medium: Wider impact)

1. Make an **invitation after mass**, and make a **table** available, to call folks to commit to prayer/fasting for Immigration Reform (see resource list on extranet).
2. Form a team, or invite a parish social ministry coordinator to form a team to hold a **'house meeting(s)'** at the parish or in a home, in which you share immigration stories, discuss Catholic Social Teaching, and invite others to become leaders in the movement for immigration reform.
3. **Gather signatures** of people who would like to actively engage in this issue and be advocates for those who are undocumented and for a just and compassionate reform... [give form]
4. **Write a letter to your local paper** in support of just and compassionate immigration reform and invite others to join you.³

Third Tier Next Steps (Challenge: Lasting impact)

1. Consider making an appointment for a **legislative visit** to your congressional representative with a delegation from your parish. (Remember to choose the right people, include stories, and hold a brief training before you go; Office of Respect Life, Justice & Peace can recommend trainers.)
2. Hold a **Mass and/or Procession** or other public liturgy/event for Immigration Reform, coordinating with others in your area.
3. **Organizing resources.** Consider building empowering relationships and leadership in your parish community in partnership with Orange County Congregation Community Organization (OCCCO), <http://www.occcopico.org/>.

¹ See resource on Prayers of the Faithful for Immigration on Priests Extranet and rcbo.org/respect-life, where all the resources mentioned are gathered. For additional prayer and liturgy ideas, please see the following: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/liturgy-prayer-suggestions.pdf>

² Here is a sample/model: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/sample-homily-cardina-mccarrick.pdf>

³ For a good model of opinion writing, see: <http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/03/28/2786526/immigration-laws-need-reform.html#storylink=cpy>