



On Recent Violence, Public Trust, and the Call for Peace and Accountability

January 28, 2026

The Catholic bishops of California are deeply saddened and alarmed by the recent loss of life connected to federal immigration enforcement activity. We mourn those who have died, pray for their families, and stand with communities now living in fear and uncertainty. At a moment when people are exercising their First Amendment rights to protest and seek accountability, violence only deepens wounds and erodes the foundations of peace and public trust.

We echo our brother bishops' call for restraint, transparency, and respect for the dignity of every human life. In a constitutional republic grounded in checks and balances, accountability, due process, and truth are not optional.

Deportation alone is not an immigration strategy. Enforcement without proportionality and power without accountability cannot produce safety or stability. Instead, they exacerbate fear, separate families, and place already-vulnerable lives at greater risk. Immigration policy must first recognize that migrants are human beings imbued with inherent dignity and then offer solutions grounded in justice rather than fear or force.

Pope Paul VI taught, "If you want peace, work for justice." Pope Francis reiterated this truth, reminding the world that "Without justice, there is no peace." And Pope Leo XIV stressed, "I believe we must seek ways of treating people with humanity, with the dignity that is theirs."

In this moment, it is right to question whether our leaders truly seek peace, intend justice, or are concerned with treating all people humanely. The actions of many who give orders and follow orders no longer reflect the values upon which our society is based, and certainly not the Christian command to love one's neighbor as oneself.

In this light, we renew our call for meaningful immigration reform—one that addresses the root causes of migration, provides lawful pathways, preserves family unity, and upholds the rule of law without resorting to excessive or indiscriminate force.

In this painful moment, we pray that our nation may embrace the demanding work of accountability and truth, without which peace cannot endure.

In this moment of sorrow and civic unease:

- We urge prayer for the victims, their families, and for peace in our communities.
- We stand in solidarity with migrants and refugees, demanding just treatment and prioritizing family unity and community stability.
- We call upon public officials, law enforcement, and immigration authorities to adopt de-escalation practices, conduct transparent investigations, and ensure accountability, mindful that peace and justice are inseparable.
- We assert that a society's moral health depends on the restoration of trust through truth, dialogue, and mutual respect—principles rooted in our Catholic understanding of human dignity.

May the Prince of Peace call our nation to account, turn us away from violence and fear, and lead us toward justice, reconciliation, and lasting peace.