



**ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE of ORANGE**

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
13280 CHAPMAN AVENUE, GARDEN GROVE, CA 92840

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The present moment in time is a critical opportunity to stand with Dreamers. "Dreamers" refers to immigrant youths brought to the U.S. as children by their parents without legal documentation. The current administration has eliminated the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program thereby removing protections (that begin expiring March 5, 2018) for nearly 800,000 young people who live next door, work with us, and worship alongside us at church.

As we have now begun the Novena for the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe in our parishes and homes and other places (and a journey through the streets of our cities where the shrines of Our Lady shine forth in the night will remind us of this) let us remember her words to Juan Diego: "Are you not under my shadow and protection?" Let us place DACA Youth and Dreamers under the protection of our Blessed Mother and, as she draws us close to her Son, may we hear his call to his disciples to "Be watchful! Be alert!"

Advent is not a time to fall asleep, but it is a time to dream and hope and to prophetically reflect and speak. As bishops in Orange County, California, we join bishops throughout the nation in working actively for the dream of a comprehensive immigration reform that will address our broken immigration system. As we await that justice, we cry out on behalf of DACA Youth and other Dreamers that they may have the chance to stay in the only home they have ever known.

We recall the circumstances before the birth of Jesus which required pregnant Mary and Joseph to make a journey to register with the occupying Roman Empire. We recall the dream in which the angel of the Lord warned Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt in order to spare the child Jesus from certain death. We recall the countless persons – children, youth, women, men, families – that we have met in the course of our ministries, immigrants that are leaders in our parishes and blessings to our communities.

In the celebrations of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Patroness of the Diocese of Orange and the Patroness of the Americas), the Vietnamese Martyrs, Simbang Gabi, Santo Niño, and so many devotions from the cultural richness of the Body of Christ here in the Diocese of Orange, especially during this Advent season, we are reminded of the many ways that God has bound us together in love as his people. If we reflect on these sacred and joyful celebrations of Faith, we can also be brought back



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to celebrations of Faith and family that the Italians, Polish, Irish, Germans and other immigrant families brought with them to our shores, and how they built up their communities here in these United States in past generations. As the United States of America, we would not be the same reality and community, had they not been here!

In Advent, we wait, we dream of the concreteness of love. This love comes into the world in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. As Pope Francis has said, "Jesus himself, when he speaks of love, tells us concrete things: feed the hungry, visit the sick. They are all 'concrete things' for indeed 'love is concrete'" (1/9/14).

We write to ask you to express love in a concrete way during the Novena to Guadalupe (December 3rd through December 12th) and throughout Advent in two ways.

- First, please pray for DACA Youth, Dreamers, and all immigrants who come to Orange County from every corner of the globe.
- Second, please contact your member of Congress and urge them to publicly support Dreamers and pass the DREAM Act to protect these young people and their families.

(See the end of this letter for instructions for both.)

May the Lord keep us awake as we await with joyful hope; may God grant us the grace to make concrete the dreams of the coming Kingdom of God, which we will hear narrated in Sacred Scripture these days of Advent; and may we strengthen the bonds among us as the human family as we await with active patience the celebration of the birth of our Lord.

In Christ,

The Most Rev. Kevin W. Vann
Bishop of Orange

The Most Rev. Timothy Freyer
Auxiliary Bishop of Orange

The Rev. Thanh Thai Nguyen
Auxiliary Bishop-Elect of Orange



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TAKE ACTION

Here are three simple things that you can do to take action:

- (1) Find your representative online: www.house.gov/htbin/findrep
- (2) Click through to your representative's website and contact his or her office with your own, personalized message (make a personal phone call AND write through social media, email). Here is an example message:

Hello, my name is [Name] and I am a constituent [and a voter (if you are)]

As a Catholic, I am calling [/writing] to you to express my support for the Dream Act of 2017 or similar legislation to ensure that Dreamers have the chance to stay in the only home they have ever known. The young people who stand to benefit by this bill are contributors to our economy, military veterans or current service members, students excelling in our universities, and leaders in our parishes and communities. They stand in a long line of immigrants making extraordinary contributions to our nation.

I join our bishops in supporting these young people as we believe in protecting the dignity of every human being, especially that of our children. These immigrant sisters and brothers deserve continued protection and a path to citizenship. They should not be forced to live their lives in constant fear that they will be deported at any moment or separated from their families.

Please do the right thing and sponsor the DREAM Act and speak publicly in support of these inspiring young people. Please come together with your colleagues in Congress to act before the end of the year.

- (3) After you contact Congress, share, tweet, tag, on your social media accounts (and don't forget to use #ShareJourney)



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Joins us in Prayer:

Justice for Dreamers – An Advent Prayer

Gracious Lord,

While still in your mother’s womb, you travelled with Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem where your parents were forced to register by an occupying empire.

In a dream an angel appeared to warn Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt to spare you from certain death.

In your youth, you were brought by your parents to Jerusalem, where you remained, listening and questioning and amazing leaders with your understanding and answers.

As an adult you called your disciples to let children come unto you

And not to hinder them.

Grant, O Lord, unto the leaders of the United States the wisdom and teachable spirit to recognize the good gifts that we receive from DACA Youth and other immigrant Dreamers, the conviction to respect their life and dignity, and the courage to pass legislation to protect their stay here and offer a path to eventual citizenship.

We pray for justice and mercy in the land, attentiveness to our common humanity, and courage for all people of faith and good will to stand with immigrant sisters and brothers, by the worshipful intercession of our Patroness,

Your glorious Mother, Our Lady of Guadalupe, in your Most Holy Name. Amen.

More resources for prayer and action available at: rcbo.org/immigrationministry