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Birthday Corner:

AUGUST

26 Bro. Tony Kreinus, SVD

SEPTEMBER

2 Kim Pham

2 Bro. Larry Kieffer, SVD



THE PRESIDENT

Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD

Big Enough To Make A Difference?

At the beginning of a new academic year, the number of students is a vital question. DWC has made a good start, welcoming 25 new students, matching the number that departed last spring. Our starting enrollment is 111 students who hail from 21 nations.

The student body includes 34 members of the Arnoldus Family: 23 SVD candidates, 5 SVD juniors, 3 SVD priests, and 3 SSpS students. The number of SVD candidates has increased by 6 over last August; and of the 23 candidates here this semester, 19 were recruited from within the USA/Canada.

For our international and intercultural community at Divine Word College, a recent pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of Iowa is a very welcome development. (A copy is attached to this newsletter.) The message is their third communication about immigration over the past fifteen months. It carefully and clearly states the Church's teaching on care for and accompaniment of migrants.

Do you think it will make a difference?

Four points are especially emphasized in the bishops' letter:

- The call to **welcome the stranger** is not optional — it is at the heart of the Christian life. In every migrant, we encounter Christ himself.
- Nations have the **right to regulate borders**, but must do so justly and **with respect for human rights**.
- Catholics have a moral responsibility to uphold the dignity of migrants and **resist dehumanizing narratives**.
- Parishes and Catholic institutions should **provide legal aid, pastoral support, and education** on immigration issues.



Some people could be surprised that immigration is so important for Iowa that our bishops would address it so repeatedly and so forcefully. However, immigrant participation in the farm economy, in health and elder care, and in the construction and hospitality industries is very notable. Over the past decade, Iowa has become increasingly reliant on international migration to offset slow growth and address labor shortages.

For many years, DWC has emphasized accompanying immigrants and educating the wider public about immigration. In addition to the core College activity of providing missionary education to immigrant students, the Epworth SVD community accompanies local Vietnamese, Spanish, and French speaking congregations in nearby parishes. Some of our students and staff help at a local welcome center for immigrants. Some others regularly visit local retirement centers – a visit by a friendly face from another part of the world can be very effective at changing the perception of foreigners!

Many local people come to DWC to share in our multicultural liturgies, parties and events, some come to help students with English conversation. A benefit of encouraging direct contact is that insulting language about immigrants is much less tolerable if you know a newcomer face to face. And of course, for more than 60 years, DWC has been proudly flying international flags along highway 20.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Dr. Joshua Young

Student Educational Supports are Available

As the new academic year begins, students and faculty are reminded that support is available through the College’s Educational Strategist, Ms. Cindy Ehrlich. As Educational Strategist, Ms. Ehrlich can meet with students and identify barriers to learning and help guide students through the disability accommodation process if needed. Students may contact Sr. Aprilia Untarto, SSpS, to schedule an appointment with Ms. Ehrlich. After a student meets with the Educational

Does any of that make a difference?

The College is very much like our parishes in North America where SVDs and parishioners are engaged in accompanying and supporting immigrant communities. I once worked in Fr. Wayne, IN where more than twenty nations were represented in the congregation – including Spanish, Vietnamese and English speakers. Across North America, the three SVD Provinces are helping to staff at least 110 parishes, two thirds of them focused on care for immigrant communities. We reach out in many languages including: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Polish, Italian, Chinese, and Tagalog. However, in line with St. Josef Freinademetz, we know that the most important language is love.

Is that enough? Does it make any difference?

The challenges are very great, but are we too small? An African proverb provides some wisdom:

“If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.”



DWC is small. The dioceses in Iowa are small. The three SVD provinces are small. But together, with many others, we can make enough noise to help awaken a sleeping nation.



Strategist, students receive a report that can be shared with their instructors about how to best support their learning. Students are responsible for sharing this information in order to receive the appropriate support from instructors. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the resources available through the Academic Resource Center (ARC). The ARC offers tutoring services and hosts numerous workshops throughout the academic year. Please see Dr. Richard Garrett for more information about resources available in the ARC.

Faculty that are concerned about a student’s progress or behavior in class may also recommend a student meet with the Educational Strategist through [the Early Student Intervention Form](#). Faculty filing an Early Student Intervention form must submit the form to the VPAA, the VPSLF, and Sr. Untarto, as Student Resource Coordinator.

HLC Assurance Report Locking In

This week, DWC will submit the final draft of the Higher Learning Commission Assurance Argument in anticipation of the accreditation visitation at the end of September. The Assurance Argument is a result of efforts by the College community to demonstrate it meets the high standards of accreditation in higher education and is compliant with federal law. Throughout the process, everyone involved has gained a new appreciation of the College, its mission, and our impact. Information about the visit will be available soon.

Welcoming Alumni: An Invitation

As the College prepares to welcome a group of excited alumni this weekend, members of the College faculty are encouraged to participate in the activities available. The relationship between student and teacher is very important for learning to take place and continuing those relationships after a student has graduated keeps them tied to our community. Staying tied to the community results in alumni supporting the College, including our current faculty, staff, and students.

When faculty continue to engage with alumni, they demonstrate the missionary character of the College by continuing to welcome home those formed by the institution and our community efforts. Any Faculty looking to volunteer are encouraged to contact Sandy Wilgenbusch to see what opportunities are still available.

ASSESSMENT LOOP

Ms. Kimberly Burnett-Hackbarth

Faculty Evaluations of Spring 2025 Collection (Assessed Fall 2025)

Instructor	Assignment/Class	Faculty Evaluator	Assessed PLOs
Fr. Stephen Nguyen	THM 277 Catholic Social Teaching	Round 1 - Dr. Joshua Young Round 2 - Fr. Simon Hoang Round 3 - Dr. Jason Reed Round 4 - Dr. Ben Wintress	CORE #4
Dr. Ron Condon/Dr. Jason Reed	PHI 499 Philosophy Capstone Paper	Round 1 - Sr. Aprilia Untarto Round 2 - Mr. Mike Mason Round 3 - Fr. Stephen Nguyen Round 4 - Fr. Simon Hoang	PHI/BA/1 PHI/BA/2 PHI/BA/3

1. Dates for Assessment Rounds:

- Round 1:** August 25 to September 1
- Round 2:** September 1 to September 8
- Round 3:** September 8 to September 15
- Round 4:** September 15 to September 22

2. Evaluation Periods:

Open from Monday 8:00 A.M. to the following Monday 8:00 A.M.

3. The login link for OAP is as follows:

<https://www.watermarkinsights.com/client-resources/signon/>

You might have to click “log in” twice.

4. Watermark Support Contacts:

support@watermarkinsights.com
Customer Service Hotline: 1-800-311-5656



VICE PRESIDENT FOR FORMATION/DEAN OF STUDENTS
Fr. Tuan Hoang, SVD



Divine Word College's All Alumni Reunion

This weekend will be busy for Divine Word College as the college is hosting an All Alumni Reunion from Friday, August 29, 2025 to Sunday, August 31, 2025. The college is expecting more than 100 alumni for the reunion. There will be fun and games, food, entertainment, and special liturgy for our alumni.

Fr. Thang Hoang, the Director of the Alumni Association, is asking for your help. This week, I will put a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board to ask for volunteers. Fr. Thang also extends his welcome to all students to join the alumni in this event.

All students are required to join the alumni in the Family Feast Games on Saturday morning. Also, it is highly encouraged for all students to join them for the picnic meal after the games, and the banquet in the evening. Please join the DWC community welcoming our alumni and to know one another better this weekend.

Ministry Practicum Meeting

All students who are in the undergraduate program are required to participate in the Ministry Practicum Program. Sr. Aprilia Untarto, SSpS, the coordinator of the program, Fr. Sonny De Class, SVD and I will make the arrangements for the ministry site for your ministry according to your choice. Please know that some of you will not get your preference.

To prepare for your ministry practicum, this Thursday, August 28, 2025, there will be an orientation for ministry practicum at 1:00 pm in room 107. Fr. Sonny De Class will be sharing the information and what is expected from the program. Also, there will be ministry commissioning this Sunday, September 7, 2025 during our Sunday liturgy at 10:00 am. All students in this program are required to come to the orientation and commissioning.

ANNUAL 5K

RUN & WALK



Annual 5k Run and Walk

Next Monday, the U.S. will celebrate Labor Day to honor the American labor movement. Therefore, there will be no classes on Monday, September 1. On this day, the Student Senate will host the annual 5K Run and Walk for the Divine Word College community. This event will begin at 9:00 am in the front entrance. There will be prizes for the winners. Please join the community in this annual event.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMISSIONS

Len Uhal

DWC Presidential Scholarship

Divine Word College first awarded the Presidential Scholarship in 1979. This scholarship is a recognition of and an honor for students who show promise of superior academic achievement.

The Presidential Scholarship includes an annual award of up to \$3,000 renewable each year the recipient continues to meet the established guidelines. The award may result in a further discount of tuition. A maximum of two students may receive this scholarship in a single year.

Criteria for Selection: Students in the Undergraduate Program at Divine Word College are eligible to apply for the Presidential Scholarship provided they meet the following criteria:

- Applicants entering from high school must have a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or above.
- College transfer applicants must have a cumulative college GPA of 3.50 or above.

- Applicants who have completed secondary school or college/university studies abroad must have an acceptable equivalent cumulative GPA.
- Students in the undergraduate program may apply at any time during their studies at Divine Word College provided they have a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher.

If you believe you qualify for the DWC Presidential Scholarship, please complete the application form by September 5, 2025, **which you can obtain from Ms. Carolyn Waechter**, the Financial Aid Coordinator. Carolyn can also answer any of your questions.



VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS

Steve Winger

Dining Services Update

Divine Word College is pleased to announce the renewal of our food service contract with Elior Collegiate Dining, formerly known as Aladdin Campus Dining. This five-year agreement continues our valued partnership and introduces a refreshed brand identity that reflects Elior's broader commitment to innovation and excellence in collegiate dining. While the same dedicated team remains in place, students, faculty, and staff can look forward to enhanced menu offerings, and chef-inspired dishes designed to elevate the dining experience.

Elior emphasizes sustainability and nutrition, sourcing fresh, minimally processed ingredients and prioritizing local and responsible purchasing whenever possible. This approach supports regional producers, promotes transparency in food sourcing, and aligns with our values of stewardship and community engagement. Elior has also expressed a strong willingness to collaborate with students in the kitchen, offering





opportunities for hands-on experience, learning, and involvement in food preparation.

These updates reflect Elior’s continued commitment to providing high-quality, student-centered dining services at Divine Word College. Their focus on fresh ingredients, responsible sourcing, and student engagement supports a vibrant and inclusive dining environment. We look forward to building on our strong partnership and seeing the positive impact of these enhancements throughout the coming academic year at the college.

external affairs

Welcoming Alumni -- August 29–31

On **August 29–31, 2025**, Divine Word College will open its doors to alumni from across the country and around the world for the **All Alumni Reunion**. Over 100 guests are expected to participate including Alumni and their families.

This gathering is a joyful time for those who once lived, studied, and were formed by Divine Word Missionaries to return and celebrate their roots. For us who currently live and serve at Divine Word College, the reunion is also an important opportunity to extend our missionary spirit of welcome.



Over three days, alumni will gather for prayer, fellowship, and celebration. Here on campus, we will be hosting several events that you are invited to take part in or help support.

Reunion Schedule

Friday, August 29

- **6:00 – 10:00 PM** – Welcome Reception at the Grand River Center, Dubuque

Saturday, August 30

- **7:30 AM** – Registration Opens (**Front Entrance**)
- **8:00 AM** – Community Mass – Fr. Tom Ascheman, SVD, Presider (**Main Chapel**)
- **Following Mass** – Breakfast items available (**Dining Room**)
- **9:30 AM** – Family Feast Games (**Soccer Field**)
- **11:30 AM** – Picnic Lunch (**Courtyard**)
- **1:00 – 4:00 PM** – Pour House and Student Lounge open for guests to visit
- **1:00 – 4:00 PM** – Disc golf and Pickleball available for guests (**Campus & Gym**)
- **1:00 – 5:00 PM** – Merchandise Sale (**Front Entrance**)

- **1:00 PM** – Building Tour (**Dining Room**)
- **2:00 PM** – Building Tour (**Dining Room**)
- **3:00 PM** – Building Tour (**Dining Room**)
- **3:00 PM** – Chat: Update on the Chicago Province SVD – Fr. Adam Oleszczuk, SVD, Fr. Thang Hoang, SVD (**Room 107**)
- **4:30 PM** – President’s Welcome and Mission Talk – John Zlabek and Walter Conlon share their experience of volunteering in Ukraine (**Main Chapel**)
- **6:00 PM** – Banquet (**Dining Room**)
- **Following the Banquet** – Bonfire (**Courtyard**)

- **11:00 AM** – Merchandise Sale (**Front Entrance**)
- **Following Mass** – Brunch (**Dining Room**)

The presence and participation of our students, staff, and faculty will make this reunion truly special. A kind word, a smile, a song, or simply joining in prayer can mean so much to those who participate in this wonderful event.

As with any large event here at DWC, we rely on the assistance of students and employees to help make it a success and enjoyable for all.

Thank you in advance for your generous help and support. By welcoming our alumni with warmth and hospitality, we continue to live out our calling as a community of the Divine Word.

Sunday, August 31

- **10:00 AM** – All-Alumni Liturgy – Fr. Adam Oleszczuk, SVD, Presider and Fr. Ed Peklo, SVD, Homilist (**Main Chapel**)




Divine Word College

Upcoming Events

Fall 2025

AUG 29	Alumni Reunion & Family Feast <small>From Aug. 29 – Sep. 1</small>
SEP 2	Labor Day - No Classes <small>5K Run/Walk sponsored by Student Senate</small>
SEP 8	SVD Foundation Day <small>150th Anniversary</small>
SEP 20	SVD Perpetual Vows <small>In Chicago, Illinois</small>
SEP 29	HLC Accreditation Visit <small>Monday and Tuesday</small>
OCT 3	Board of Trustees <small>From Oct. 3 – Oct. 4</small>
OCT 19	Mission Sunday <small>Preparations begin on Oct. 17</small>

 Matthew Jacoby Library

opac.dwci.edu

Self Check-Out Temporarily Out of Order

Our main self check-out station is currently out of service. But no worries—an **alternate check-out station** is available. Please use that station to borrow materials while we work on repairs. Thank you for your patience!



New Resource: Digital Theological Library 2 (DTL2)

Divine Word College now has an institutional subscription to the **Digital Theological Library 2, a.k.a. DTL2!**

DTL2 is a co-owned, born-digital library offering a vast collection of resources in religious and theological studies—and much more. Its mission is to provide high-quality digital content at the lowest possible cost to its member institutions.

Here’s a glimpse of what’s available:

- **Books:** 1.4 million+
- **Articles:** 104 million+
- **Journals:** 61,000+
- **Databases:** 119+

Some resources are open access, but for full access, you’ll need login credentials. Stop by the library or contact the Library Director to get your remote access sheet.

Whether you’re researching for a class, preparing a homily, or exploring a new topic, DTL2 is a powerful tool to support your work.

New Books on Display!

Over the summer, **hundreds of new books** were added to the library’s collection! These include titles across theology, psychology, philosophy, history, and more. Come explore the display at the front of the library and discover something new to read or research.



Pilgrims of Hope

A Pastoral Reflection on Immigration

To the Catholic Faithful in the Province of Iowa and to
All Persons of Good Will



Photo by Shutterstock

Aug. 22, 2025, Memorial of the Queenship of Mary



IOWA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

I. Wherever you lodge, I will lodge (Ruth 1:16)



Photo by the Iowa Catholic Conference

1. The Catholic Church has always proclaimed the inviolable dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God.¹ Governments do not bestow this dignity, nor does legal status instill it, but it is intrinsic to every human person as a beloved child of the heavenly Father. In every age, the People of God are called to uphold this truth by welcoming the stranger, defending the oppressed, and standing in solidarity with those who are displaced.

2. Immigration is not merely a political or economic issue; it is a deeply moral matter that calls for a response rooted in faith, justice, and mercy. Sacred Scripture consistently reveals God’s care for the immigrant and the refugee: *“You shall not oppress a stranger; you yourselves know how it feels to be a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”* (Ex 23:9).

¹ Genesis 1:27.

3. The right to migrate has long been affirmed in Catholic moral teaching. Pope John XXIII taught that “every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own state. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to migrate to other countries and take up residence there.”²

4. More recently, in an address to world diplomats, Pope Leo XIV enjoins us, “No one is exempted from striving to ensure respect for the dignity of every person, especially the most frail and vulnerable, from the unborn to the elderly, from the sick to the unemployed, citizens and immigrants alike.” Our present pontiff continues, “All of us, in the course of our lives, can find ourselves healthy or sick, employed or unemployed, living in our native land or in a foreign country, yet our dignity always remains unchanged: it is the dignity of a creature willed and loved by God.”³

5. At a time when political rhetoric often generates division and fear, the Church stands as a beacon of God-given hope. This hope is not mere optimism that ignores where good is absent, but a virtue that sustains us in the work of justice.⁴ Hope resists the tendency to become indifferent to the suffering of migrants; it prevents us from resigning ourselves to the injustices that force them from their homes. Rather, it demands that we respond with courage and solidarity, recognizing that our faith is measured by the way we treat the most vulnerable among us.⁵ Our hope spurs us to ensure that migrants can share a life worth living, founded on conditions that enable them, with us, to flourish.

6. The social mission of the Church must always begin with persons who are poor, displaced, and otherwise neglected. These individuals are not simply

² Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, ¶25.

³ Pope Leo XIV, *Audience to Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See*, 16 May 2025.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Address on Social Justice*, 2023.

⁵ *Fratelli Tutti*, ¶64.

objects of charity but agents of God's presence, who evangelize us through their endurance and fidelity.⁶ We can find inspiration in the Bible's account of Ruth, the daughter-in-law of the widowed Naomi. When Ruth's husband also dies, leaving Naomi bereft of children, Naomi decides to return to her native Judah. In the face of tragic circumstances, Ruth remains loyal to Naomi and emigrates with her in order to accompany and support her. Ruth's pledge, "Wherever you lodge, I will lodge" (Ruth 1:16), reveals God's universal concern for humanity and the blessing God bestows upon those who care for others who are not affiliated with us by blood relation or nationality.

7. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that "love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential to her [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel."⁷ In welcoming the migrant, we welcome Jesus himself. In defending their dignity, we proclaim the Gospel. And in advocating for justice, we embody the love of Christ, in whom "love and truth meet, justice and peace embrace."⁸ Jesus desires that all his children live in peace and security.

8. As we reflect on the current state of immigration in the United States and beyond, including extant and pending actions by our government, we must ask ourselves: Are we a Church who welcomes or a Church who excludes? Are we led by faith or by fear? Do we see Christ in the migrant, regarding them as neighbor in the spirit of the Good Samaritan parable, or do we turn away? May this reflection serve as a renewed call to discipleship, inviting us to see Christ in the faces of those whose life path intersects with our own as pilgrims of hope.

⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, ¶197.

⁷ *Deus Caritas Est*, ¶22.

⁸ See *Psalms* 85:11.

II. Immigration Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

9. The Church's teaching on migration is not an abstract theory but is rooted in the concrete experiences of migrants and their neighbors. Migration is a moral and political issue that should evoke responses shaped by justice, charity, and respect for human dignity. Pope Benedict XVI exhorts us that "the reality of migration must never become an occasion for conflict, but rather an opportunity for building peace."⁹

10. This conviction has deep roots in the Church's Magisterium — the body of tradition and teaching by the Church's pastors, the bishops, throughout the centuries. The Church's teaching on migration is not simply another political viewpoint to be weighed against others; it is grounded in Scripture, tradition, and reason. Faithful Catholics are called to engage this teaching and allow it to shape and guide their consciences.

11. Pope Pius XII, in his Apostolic Constitution *Exsul Familia*, affirms the Church's steadfast commitment to the protection and pastoral care of migrants and refugees. Issued in the aftermath of World War II when mass displacement of people was a pervasive phenomenon, the document frames migration as a moral and ecclesial concern before it is a political one. Pius XII teaches that the Church's ministry to migrants is a long-standing expression of her maternal solicitude, conceiving the migrant and refugee as a brother or sister in Christ to be treated with dignity in love instead of being viewed as an outsider devoid of all dignity and worth.

12. At the core of Catholic Social Teaching is the conviction that every person has a right to live in conditions consistent with his or her human

⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2011.

dignity.¹⁰ All persons come from somewhere and seek to live a decent and dignified life where they presently reside. But when their right to exist and other basic human rights are threatened or denied to an extent that they decide to exercise their right to migrate, the Church upholds this latter right. Indeed, the Church teaches, “Among man’s personal rights, we must include his right to enter a country in which he hopes to provide for himself and his dependents.”¹¹ When people are unable to provide for their families due to violence, persecution, or extreme poverty, they have a right to seek a better life elsewhere.¹²

13. At the same time, nations have the right to regulate their borders for the sake of the common good, provided these safeguards are justly enacted with respect for fundamental human rights.¹³ The Church does not argue for unrestricted migration, but she does reject policies that are inhumane, arbitrary, or disproportionately punitive.

14. Overall, weighing these collective and personal goods that are not readily reconciled is a matter for prudential, political discernment and deliberation. St. John Paul II acknowledged this dynamic, noting that immigration policies must ensure both the security of nations and the rights of migrants.¹⁴ However, the security of a nation can never be used as an excuse to violate the dignity and human rights of migrants, including the right to due process under law. Nor should economic expediency be the gauge of persons’ worth.

¹⁰ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, ¶365.

¹¹ *Pacem in Terris*, ¶106

¹² *Pacem in Terris*, ¶25.

¹³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ¶2241.

¹⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, ¶65

15. The prophetic role of the Church is to proclaim the truth, ensuring that immigration policies reflect proper competence and moral accountability of respective authorities. The Gospel values of justice and human solidarity are rooted in both faith and reason. The Church is not a partisan institution; she is a mother, called to defend her most vulnerable children. Pope Francis maintains, “It is not just about migrants; it is about all of us, about the present and future of our human family.”¹⁵ This is why Catholic institutions engage in legal aid, refugee resettlement, and advocacy efforts for just and compassionate immigration reform.¹⁶

¹⁵ Pope Francis, *Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2019.

¹⁶ United States Conference of Catholic bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, 2003

III. The Immigration Reality in the United States: A Moral and Human Concern

16. We again emphasize: While immigration policies must balance humanitarian concerns with national security and public order, such policies must never ignore or insult the fundamental dignity of the human person. It is inconsistent with the claims of justice to employ enforcement tactics that treat all immigrants, especially hardworking, longstanding, and peaceful members of our communities, in the same manner as violent criminals. Bishop Mark Seitz, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, has expressed deep concern over rhetoric that dehumanizes migrants, stating that "the use of sweeping generalizations to denigrate any group, such as describing all undocumented immigrants as 'criminals' or 'invaders,' to deprive them of protection under the law, is an affront to God, who has created each of us in his own image."¹⁷



Photo by the Iowa Catholic Conference

17. Recent executive orders have heightened concerns about violations of justice and human dignity in immigration enforcement. Policies that restrict humanitarian protections, deny asylum claims, and expand detention measures disproportionately harm the most vulnerable, including families, children, and

¹⁷ Bishop Mark Seitz, Statement on Immigration Policies, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2025

trafficking victims. The U.S. bishops have voiced particular concern about the open-ended deployment of military assets to enforce civil immigration laws, the prevention of access to asylum, and proposals that reinterpret birthright citizenship. With our brother bishops, we caution that these measures undermine the moral fabric of a nation built on principles of justice and human rights.¹⁸

18. The Church recognizes the right of nations to regulate immigration, but this right must always be exercised in accord with the precepts of justice, respect for the rule of law, and prudential restraint. Concomitantly, respect for due process is paramount and must be sustained under all sorts of trying circumstances. Longstanding jurisprudence rooted in the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution makes clear that due process is owed to all persons within the country, not just to citizens.

19. More fundamentally, the right to due process is grounded in the natural law and is inherent to every human person by virtue of her dignity — it is not merely a privilege granted by civil authority. Such a right should never be dismissed for the sake of expediency in pursuit of political objectives. When a society sets aside fundamental rights for some individuals, it risks further erosions, such as the suspension of *habeas corpus*, that would imperil the freedoms of all.

20. When immigration policies fail to reflect these principles, they subvert the common good and instead create conditions for greater exploitation, suffering, and disorder. Law must never be misused to advance the predominance of the majority at the expense of the poor, the marginalized, and vulnerable communities. Rather, respect for the common good entails that, given their respective capacities and needs, persons participate diversely in the life and activities of any given community, and this mutual participation serves

¹⁸ Ibid.

not only individual flourishing, but the overall well-being of the entire community.

21. The Iowa Catholic Conference has previously emphasized that immigration policies must reflect our shared moral commitment to human dignity and family unity, prioritizing compassion over exclusion.¹⁹ In that same vein, the bishops have affirmed their nonpartisan commitment to work with lawmakers of every stripe to advance just, responsible immigration policies. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has engaged previous and current presidential administrations and Congress to advocate for a system that is both effective and humane, protecting immigrants, refugees, and the poor as part of the Church's broader mission to uphold the dignity of all life.²⁰

22. As Catholics, we must resist narratives that reduce immigrants to political problems or pawns and instead recognize them as our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our late Holy Father, Pope Francis, cautions against attitudes that, in practice, treat migrants as "less worthy, less important, less human."²¹ The Church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel, defend the dignity of the marginalized and most vulnerable among us, and cooperate with the grace of Jesus Christ to usher in the Kingdom of God while seeking the salvation of souls. In every season of life, the words of Jesus in Matthew 25 remain our polestar: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

¹⁹ Iowa Catholic Conference, Statement on Migration - Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, May 1, 2024

²⁰ Chieko Noguchi, Statement on Executive Orders, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2024

²¹ Pope Francis, *Message for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, 2019

IV. The Church's Call to Action: Living the Faith



Photo by The Catholic Mirror

23. The Church's response to immigration must go beyond platitudes; it must take concrete form in the way believers advocate, accompany, and serve others. The treatment of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers is not a marginal issue but a gauge of how seriously we take the command to love our neighbor.

24. Every Catholic Christian has a moral responsibility to ensure that the personal dignity of migrants is upheld. This responsibility includes personal dispositions rooted in the truth of the Gospel and the attending call to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. To act in good faith means resisting narratives that dehumanize immigrants and instead recognize them as neighbors whom God allows to meet us on our life's path. We must guard against political rhetoric that instills fear and division, that skews perceptions to justify violations of fundamental rights.

25. Pope Benedict XVI observes, "In the present social and cultural context, where there is a widespread tendency to relativize truth, practicing charity in truth helps people to understand that adhering to the values of

Christianity is not merely useful but essential for building a good society and for true integral human development.”²²

26. Catholics can embrace their mission as disciples of Jesus by learning about Church teaching on immigration, participating in advocacy efforts, and supporting ministries that serve migrants and refugees. First and foremost, prayer must guide our personal and collective responses, asking God for the prudence to enact just policies and the grace to see Jesus in the faces of those seeking a better life.

27. Parishes, schools, and Catholic institutions must be places of welcome and accompaniment for migrants and refugees. This Gospel call includes providing legal aid, pastoral support, and material assistance where possible. Catholic schools and faith formation programs should incorporate education on Catholic Social Teaching regarding immigration, ensuring that young people understand the Church’s commitment to justice. Parishes can also foster intercultural dialogue, creating communities where immigrants are not seen as outsiders but as vital members of the Body of Christ.

28. The call to welcome the stranger is not optional — it is at the heart of the Christian life. In every migrant, we encounter Christ himself. The Church’s mission is clear: to defend human dignity, advocate for justice, and create a society where all are treated as beloved children of God. The way we treat the immigrant will not only define our nation — it will mark our fidelity to Christ.

²² *Caritas in Veritate*, ¶4

V. Mary, Comforter of Migrants²³: Model of Hope and Hospitality

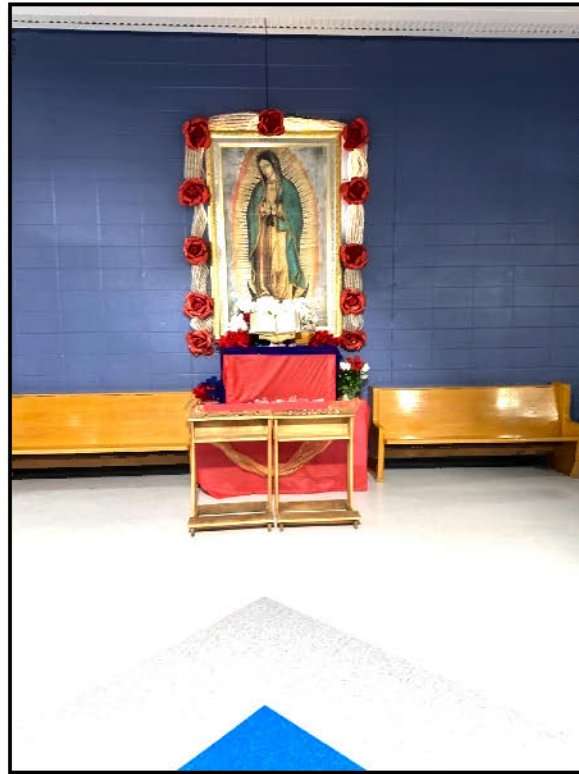


Photo by the Iowa Catholic Conference

29. As we commemorate the Queenship of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, we are invited to turn our hearts to the woman whose life manifests profound openness to God and gracious solidarity with the vulnerable. Mary experienced firsthand the harsh reality of forced migration when she and Joseph fled to Egypt with the infant Jesus, seeking refuge from persecution (Matthew 2:13-15). Their journey reflects the painful experiences of countless migrants and refugees today, who leave their homes under threat, seeking security and peace.

30. As Queen of Heaven and Earth, Mary stands as a powerful intercessor and advocate for those who journey in hope. She reminds us that

²³ “Comfort of Migrants” (*Solarium Migrantium*) was added to the Litany of Loreto by Pope Francis on June 20, 2020, Vatican News.

every migrant carries within them the image of her Son, deserving of dignity, protection, and hospitality. Just as Mary welcomed and nurtured Jesus with maternal love, the Church is called to imitate her tender care, welcoming migrants and refugees as beloved children of God.

31. Further, Mary's "yes" to God's proposal to be the Mother of his Son inspires our commitment to justice and mercy. In proclaiming that God "has lifted up the lowly" and "filled the hungry with good things" (Luke 1:46-55), Mary prophetically declares God's preferential option for the poor, the marginalized, and those on the move from locales where they and their families are not safe. Her words compel us to humbly question systems and structures that oppress and exclude, urging us toward faithful responses of solidarity and advocacy.

32. Mary, the Comfort of Migrants and Refugees, stands before us as both guide and model. May her example and intercession awaken in us a deeper commitment to live our faith in action: to welcome generously, to advocate courageously, and to love graciously.

VI. A Jubilee of Hope and a Call to Renewed Commitment

33. As the Church celebrates the Jubilee Year of 2025, we are invited into a profound season of grace, renewal, and commitment to the Gospel. The theme of this Jubilee, “Pilgrims of Hope,” reminds us that Christian hope is not passive optimism but an active trust in God’s ongoing work of redemption. This theme speaks profoundly to the experience of migrants and refugees who journey in hope seeking security, dignity, and peace.

34. Hope must be more than an idea — it must take form in the structures we build and the actions we take.²⁴ It is not enough to desire justice; we must commit to shaping systems that sustain it. This requires faithful endurance, resisting the temptation to withdraw in discouragement or be embroiled in polarizing social media posts or other messages. Meaningful change comes not through “quick fixes” but through long-term dedication to advocacy, hospitality, and accompaniment. The call to welcome the stranger challenges us to move beyond comfort and convenience, embracing a spirit of encounter that reflects the heart of the Gospel.

35. A more robust sense of hope is seamlessly tied to charity understood as the love of God in himself that carries over into love of neighbor. Carmelite Father Conrad de Meester, in the spirit of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and her “little way” of love, relates these virtues of hope and love: “This hope is no dead-end. It is love on the move; love that is constantly growing and flourishing. **Hope is love in the process of becoming.** Without hope love would suffocate.”²⁵

36. The Eucharist, the Sacrament of unity and charity, offers us the ultimate model of Christian hospitality. In the breaking of the bread, we are reminded that we are one Body in Christ, called to reconciliation and to make

²⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, ¶222.

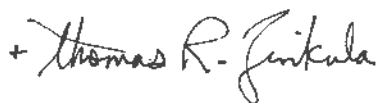
²⁵ Conrad de Meester: *With Empty Hands: The Message of St. Therese of Lisieux*, p. 107, *emphasis added*

room at the table for our sisters and brothers, especially the poor and the marginalized. The same Christ who gives himself to us in the Eucharist is present in the immigrant seeking shelter, the refugee longing for peace, and the displaced family searching for security.

37. As we proceed through this Jubilee Year, we are called to embody radical hospitality, seeing Jesus in every person who seeks refuge and stability in hope. Just as the ancient Israelites understood the time of Jubilee as a call for restoration, liberation, and renewal, so, too, does this Jubilee year invite us to renew our commitment to welcoming the stranger, advocating for justice, and working toward a society that reveals the merciful face of Christ. Our response to those seeking refuge and stability in hope is not only a reflection of our nation’s founding values, but is primarily a testament to our fidelity to Christ.

38. May this Jubilee Year be a time of conversion and renewed commitment to help “justice and peace embrace,” where we open our hearts to encounter Jesus in the migrant and the refugee, advancing a Church and a society rooted in justice, mercy, and love.

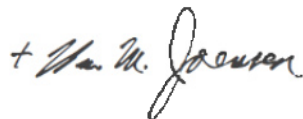
August 22, 2025, Memorial of the Queenship of Mary



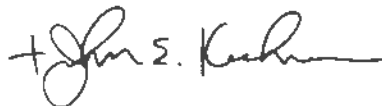
Most Rev. Thomas Zinkula
Archbishop of Dubuque



Most Rev. Dennis Walsh
Bishop of Davenport



Most Rev. William Joensen
Bishop of Des Moines



Most Rev. John Keehner
Bishop of Sioux City

"Pilgrims of Hope" is available for download at www.iowacatholicconference.org. The Iowa Catholic Conference is the public policy agency of the Catholic Church in Iowa. Its Board of Directors includes the Catholic bishops of Iowa and lay people, priests, deacons and religious sisters.