



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ARCHBISHOP ROZANSKI STATEMENT FOR WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

From the Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Archbishop of St. Louis:

On this World Day of Migrants and Refugees, I would like to convey my blessing and prayer for all who have fled poverty and violence to secure a better life for their families. This year Pope Leo has chosen “Even Just One of These Children” as the theme for this important day. In his letter, the Holy Father states that

“Even just one of these children calls each one of us, in our personal lives, to a profound listening to his or her story, fears and dreams, overcoming that detachment which reduces the human person to a statistic that does not directly concern us. It is an invitation to recognize the dignity of each child, and to safeguard his or her fundamental rights: the right to life, education, and a standard of living that enables full physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.”

The Holy Father goes on to state that “the entire Christian community is called to regard these children as its own sons and daughters.”

As we reflect on the words of Pope Leo, I’m reminded of the countless children at risk either due to their status as migrants and refugees or who have citizenship but are in families of mixed-immigration status. Every child has a story. Some are separated from their parents or siblings. Others live hidden lives, knowing that if they or their family members are identified as undocumented, they will be subject to deportation.

I’m mindful especially of the children of Nixon Perez and Glendy Gonzalez de la Cruz, who were found murdered in a field with their infant child crying beside their bodies following their forced return to Guatemala. Glendy and Nixon’s children are now orphans who face an even more uncertain future without their parents. The family was a beloved member of our archdiocesan community; their children received their first sacraments in our parishes, and they actively participated in charitable activities. Their story is tragic, and, sadly, it is also far too common.

As a Church, we are called to follow the words of Pope Leo and regard every child in such circumstances as our own sons and daughters. *Anything less is a betrayal of the Gospel.*

The Archdiocese of Saint Louis is committed to walking with migrants, refugees, and their loved ones, regardless of their legal status, and supporting them in their quest for justice and dignity. We use our resources to provide legal assistance, as well as social and pastoral support. Above all, we preach the Gospel of Jesus on their behalf, reminding the people of God that we will be judged by how we treat others; that, in the words of Christ, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” This is greater than simple charity, and our salvation hinges upon it.

Today we pray for all those men, women, and children whose lives are impacted by our broken immigration system. As people of faith, we call upon our leaders to end the program of indiscriminate detention and mass deportation and establish a path to legal status for those currently without documentation. We ask that undocumented children living in the United States and adults who were brought by their parents to this country as children be provided a means of attaining citizenship. We pray that avenues be provided so mixed-status families who have long contributed to our communities and our country can remain together. We pray for all officers of the law, that they be treated with respect and that they themselves extend that respect to others. And we call for the conversion of hearts, that the mercy of God transforms each of us into agents of God’s unending mercy and compassion.

I would like to conclude with the words of the Holy Father in his statement for World Day of Migrants and Refugees: “Let us entrust migrant and refugee children to the maternal protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, together with Saint Joseph and the child Jesus, experienced the cruelty of Herod’s violence and the tragedy of exile in Egypt. May she accompany their steps and help our communities to become living and credible signs of the Gospel.” (Pope Leo, Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, August 11, 2026)

+ **Mitchell T. Rozanski**
Archbishop of St. Louis

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Reference

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#)