



Archbishop Gustavo Garcia-Siller of San Antonio, center left, is seen in a file photo celebrating Mass with other clergymen for undocumented immigrants held at the South Texas Detention Center in Pearsall, Texas. More than a dozen Catholic bishops from dioceses along the border of Texas and Northern Mexico issued a joint statement Feb. 28, 2025, emphasizing the need for proposals to improve migrants' situations. (OSV News/Today's Catholic/Jordan McMorrough)

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Catholic bishops along both sides of the Texas-Mexico border are affirming their support for the common good amid the U.S. immigration crisis, while calling for reform of the U.S. immigration system.

The bishops issued a statement during a Feb. 28 press conference that capped a Feb. 26-28 meeting, held biannually for 40 years "to coordinate efforts in our shared mission to proclaim the Gospel," according to the statement.

This year's gathering, which took place at Assumption Seminary in San Antonio focused in particular on "the situation of migrants and refugees," an issue that "has taken on new relevance with the new federal administrations" in both the U.S. and Mexico, said the statement.

As presidents for their respective episcopal conferences' migration committee, Bishop Eugenio Andrés Lira Rugarcía of Matamoros-Reynosa, Mexico, and Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso, Texas, gave a joint lecture on what the statement called "a pastoral response to the current migration crisis from the border."

In their statement, the bishops said, "We want to make it clear that the Catholic Church has always been a reliable partner of our governments, of our peoples and especially of all those in need, through processes to welcome, protect, promote and integrate the vulnerable, including collaboration in the resettlement of refugees to achieve their self-sufficiency."

The declaration comes as the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has filed suit against the Trump administration for abruptly suspending its contract with the federal government for refugee resettlement. The long-running agreement was in place under the congressionally established U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.

The administration later terminated the arrangement altogether, and filed a "notice of material change" to have the USCCB suit dismissed on the grounds the agreements no longer existed.

In addition, the Trump administration has sought to strip federal funds from nongovernmental organizations, including Catholic Charities, as part of its effort to enforce its immigration policies. A judge temporarily blocked the freeze Jan. 28. Catholic Charities agencies in general provide humanitarian aid for immigrants, help them reunite with family and obtain employment authorization, prepare them for naturalization and also provide legal counsel to those in the country illegally.

In their Feb. 28 statement, the Texas and Mexico border bishops said, "We are all together responsible in promoting the common good, simultaneously safeguarding the dignity of all by finding the right balance between various human rights, such as the right of workers and their families to have their situation regularized, the right not to be exploited, the right to migrate, the right not to need to migrate, and the right of all to have their government guarantee security in their own country."

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They added that "for decades, we have expressed our concern that in the United States we have a broken immigration system, which does not correspond to the present reality. We hope and strongly urge our political leaders to fulfill their duty to reform it."

The bishops also said, "To our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters, we want to say that the Church and its agencies remain committed to the mission of announcing the Gospel, providing living witness to the charity of the Lord Jesus by serving all people with dignity and compassion."

The bishops cited Pope Francis, who "encourages us and unites us as a Church and as a society to be inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan."

"In this task that concerns us all, we need God's help and we count on the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe," they said.

In response to a media question at the press conference, Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller of San Antonio said that Francis, in his Feb. 10 letter to the U.S. bishops on immigration, "was encouraging us to continue doing all in our possibilities to support migrants and refugees."

"And particularly, he invited us to accompany (them) properly, knowing that they are brothers and sisters, that they are holding the human dignity and that our relationship to them has to be always with the values of the Gospel," García-Siller said.

Noting the pope had in his letter cited the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), the archbishop said, "We are called to do good always, as we serve God's people — not only people from a particular country, but God's people."

García-Siller also pointed out that Francis in his letter had called for "comprehensive immigration reform," something the archbishop said the Texas-Mexico bishops were "all for" having expressed the same concern "for the last 40 years."

Bishop Daniel Flores of Brownsville, Texas, responding in Spanish to a media question, said, "The first thing is to try to invite the entire community to recognize the usefulness of people in the parishes, for example, and to offer support."

"I think it is important to point out the importance of spiritual support, the resources of the sacraments and the accompaniment of the community in difficult times, because the immigrant community sometimes goes through moments of great fear and insecurity," said Flores, who also stressed "the support of families, accompanying them so that they know they are not alone."

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. [View the full series.](#)