



December 3, 2017  
*The First Sunday of Advent*

Dear priests and deacons, consecrated religious, and all the lay faithful of the Archdiocese,

Advent greetings! As we journey toward the commemoration of the Lord's nativity, we cannot help but recall the challenges facing Mary and Joseph in traveling to Bethlehem, seeking lodging in a strange town and fleeing their country as a result of Herod's murderous persecution.

I write today to invite you to action on behalf of many young immigrants, most who are sisters and brothers in the faith, and who face deportation if some sort of legislative solution is not found before March 2018. In 2012, after the failure of Congress to pass the DREAM Act - which would have provided a path to permanent residency for the individuals who arrived in the U.S. as children, President Barack Obama established an immigration policy entitled "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals," more commonly known as DACA. The policy allowed immigrants who came to this country when they were younger than 16 years old to escape deportation and obtain work permits for a period of two years, renewable upon good behavior. The young immigrants covered by DACA and who were the subject of the never-passed DREAM Act are known as "Dreamers."

In September 2017 the Trump administration through the Office of the Attorney General for the United States announced that the DACA provision was being repealed effective March 5, 2018. Thus, after that time, those undocumented immigrants who arrived in the U.S. as children would be subject to deportation unless Congress makes legislative provisions permitting them to stay in the United States. Estimates suggest that over 800,000 young people are impacted by DACA. President Trump has called upon Congress to act.

I, along with my brother bishops, have supported these "Dreamers," while at the same time asking for a more permanent and constitutionally-sound solution to the plight of these young immigrants, most of whom know only America as their home. Pope Francis, who has called upon all Catholics to have a special concern for immigrants and refugees through his *Share the Journey* campaign, has also expressed great concern for these "Dreamers." These young people contribute to our economy, serve in our military, study in our schools, and worship and lead in our parishes.

In recent years the issue of immigration has been front and center on the American political scene. People of good will can disagree on how to best repair this country's broken immigration system. But, our Catholic faith instructs us to respect the dignity of every person and to recognize the rights of people to provide a better life for themselves and their families. Furthermore, God's word commands us to show special care for aliens and refugees: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt" (Lv 19:33-34).

Catholics recognize that all nations have the right and duty to regulate their borders for the welfare of their residents, but we are also sensitive to the demands of justice and the plight of "Dreamers" who, brought to this country as children, reared and schooled here, now face the threat of deportation from the only country they have ever really known. Therefore, as Archbishop, I call upon all the Catholics of the Archdiocese to place before the Lord the particular intention, "that Congress will pass a legislative solution for 'Dreamers' affected by the repeal of DACA that generously provides them with legal options to remain in our country." I also designate Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, as day of prayer for a legislative remedy for the protection of "Dreamers" and for a just and humane solution to our nations immigration woes. On that day, at all Masses offered throughout the Archdiocese, I direct that particular intentions be offered for this cause.

I also encourage our institutions, faith communities and all families to devote personal prayer time to this cause, invoking the maternal intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, and trusting that the Lord will answer our needs. Thank you for your witness to the love of Christ by recognizing him in the stranger, the refugee and the immigrant. May God bless and preserve you, your families, our communities, and our nation.

Sincerely yours in Jesus, the Lord of Life,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph F. Naumann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann