



Statement by Archbishop Charles J. Chaput on the arrests of unauthorized workers

December 13, 2006

"The mass arrest of unauthorized workers in Colorado and across the country this week once again puts a human face on the flaws in our immigration system; a system that needs immediate and very serious reform.

As I've said many times in the past, the Church supports the law. She supports our nation's right to regulate immigration and secure our borders for the common good of all citizens. We also deeply respect the men and women who have the task of enforcing the law in difficult circumstances.

But as Catholics, we also need to vigorously question the timing, manner and focus of these latest arrests. Staged on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and barely two weeks before Christmas, these raids have disrupted hundreds of families in the immigrant community and frightened many thousands more. And while public officials have explained the reason for these raids as criminal identity theft, most of the real criminals - the people who steal and sell the false identities so that undocumented immigrants can find work - were not among those arrested.

Dramatic, get-tough arrests of more and more average workers will not solve our immigration crisis. In fact, such actions often engender more confusion and bitterness, and they don't strike at the root of the real issue: an immigration system that seems disconnected from the human and business realities of the American economy.

As we enter the last few days before Christmas, we urgently pray that God will grant our law enforcement authorities prudence, justice and restraint in carrying out their duties, and that members of Congress will act rapidly and with courage in fixing an immigration system that has clearly failed. Above all, we need to pray for the children and spouses of those persons who were arrested and face deportation at this sacred time of year."

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