

## **COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM**

**Background.** The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has long advocated for the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform legislation. In *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, the U.S.-Mexican bishop's pastoral letter on migration, the U.S. bishops call for 1) a path to citizenship for the undocumented population in the country; 2) reform of the family-based immigration system to reunite families—husband, wife, and children—more expeditiously; 3) a future flow low-skilled worker program for migrant workers to enter and work in the U.S. safely and legally; 4) the restoration of due process protections for immigrants; and 5) policies which address the root causes of migration—poverty and persecution.

**Status.** The U.S. Senate passed S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Competitiveness, and Immigration Innovation Act of 2013, on June 27 by a vote of 68-32. It is now pending consideration in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is expected that the U.S. House of Representatives will consider immigration reform sometime in September or October.

**Why it is important to contact your Representatives over the August recess.** Congress will adjourn for the summer recess on August 2 and will not return until September 9<sup>th</sup>. During that time, members of the House of Representatives will hold town hall meetings and meet with their constituents. It is important that bishops and dioceses contact their representatives during this time as a counter to the inevitable opposition voices they will hear. If we are able to do this, it is more likely that the House of Representatives will pass comprehensive immigration reform this year.

**What you can do.** Aside from the bishop contacting the representative, there are other actions that would draw their attention, including 1) a prayer vigil, 2) a pilgrimage from a parish to a district office or to another site, 3) the provision of postcards and informational materials in parishes, 4) homilies or other talks in the parish, and 5) opinion pieces and other forms of media.

The USCCB Office of Migration Policy and Public Affairs (202-541-3174) and the Justice for Immigrants campaign (202-541-3165) can help you in these efforts. You can send a postcard or access materials at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org).