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NEWS RELEASE

Archbishop issues statement on North Portland immigration raid

Archbishop John G. Vlazny has issued a statement concerning the immigration raid in North Portland on Tuesday, June 12. Archbishop Vlazny called the raid “an affront to a nation whose tradition has always welcomed the stranger in search of the security and livelihood which he cannot find in the country of his origin.” Recognizing the stress and turmoil such raids place on family members of those arrested, the Archbishop encouraged “Catholic parishes and individuals to offer assistance and support to families that have been affected by this raid.”

The Archdiocese of Portland joins with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in supporting passage of a “just and humane comprehensive immigration reform bill in Congress.” The U.S. Bishops call for an immigration bill based upon five principals:

- To make family a priority in immigration law.
- To insist that worker programs contain protection for U.S. citizen and migrant workers.
- To allow for earned legalization for undocumented immigrants.
- To restore due process protections for immigrants.
- To respond to the economic, political and social root causes of immigration.

Statement of Archbishop John G. Vlazny

Yesterday’s raid on the Fresh Del Monte Produce plant in North Portland is an affront to a nation whose tradition has always welcomed the stranger in search of the security and livelihood which he cannot find in the country of his origin.

167 families have been torn apart. They live in uncertainty. Many do not know where the sole support of their family has been taken. They have no idea when or if their loved ones will return. Within the immigrant community, there is a fear that raids such as this are aimed at ridding the country of a significant number of immigrants before immigration reform is achieved.

Comprehensive reform of United States' immigration policies is an urgent need. Congress cannot wait to reform the immigration system because human beings are suffering. Human life and human dignity are at stake. Our current policies do not provide reasonable and timely procedures for those seeking residency or citizenship. They do not adequately provide for family reunification.

If such reform is to be achieved, it is essential that there be a moratorium on such raids until Congress can reform the nation's immigration system. We ask that public officials work toward a reasonable solution that will offer a path to citizenship to immigrants who are now forced to live in the shadows. The immigrant community that lives in our midst is frightened and in pain. I encourage Catholic parishes and individuals to offer assistance and support to families that have been affected by this raid.

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