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A light-skinned man in golden vestments and a mitre with a crozier walks down a cathedral ai

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles processes during the annual Mass in Recognition of All Immigrants Sept. 17, 2023, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. (OSV News photo/John Rueda, courtesy Archdiocese of Los Angeles)

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Los Angeles — September 21, 2023

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Grim developments on the southern U.S. border and the "frustrating" lack of immigration reform were on the minds of some 1,500 Southern California Catholics at the annual Mass in Recognition of All Immigrants Sept. 17 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

Whether it was the perceived cruelty of sending bus after bus of migrants from Texas to Los Angeles, or a federal judge recently ruling that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, program -- which allows individuals who were brought to the United States as children to be protected from deportation -- to be illegal, disappointment was an underlying emotion of the day.

"This has been another frustrating summer, part of another frustrating year for all of us who hope for immigration reform," said Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez in

his homily. "People are being sent from the border all over the country. There is no plan for them to be welcome. No plan for them to be served. We are all working together to welcome them and provide for their needs. But our leaders seem to be standing by instead of coming together and working to fix our broken immigration system."

Gomez celebrated the Mass along with Cardinal Roger M. Mahony, retired archbishop of Los Angeles, as well as Bishop-designates Brian Nunes and Slawomir S. Szkredka, several priests. Massgoers came from dioceses and groups all over Southern California.

Despite the air of frustration, the event praised all those working to assist immigrants in need, especially the LA Welcomes Collective, which has been at the forefront of the recent busing of migrants to address their needs.

The collective -- consisting of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Central American Resource Center-Los Angeles, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, Esperanza Immigrant Rights Project and Immigrant Defenders Law Center -- has sprung into action to support and care for the hundreds of migrants that have been sent in buses from Texas to Los Angeles since early June.

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Also honored during the Mass were leaders, volunteers and parishioners at St. Anthony's Croatian Church, St. Peter's Italian Church, Cathedral High School and Salesian High School for their efforts in receiving the migrants, offering them care and assisting with resources. Young adults at American Martyrs Church in Manhattan Beach were recognized for their service in accompanying and supporting immigrant minors.

All honorees were given a special pin designed by artist Lalo Garcia to commemorate LA Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell, who was the co-founder of the Interdiocesan Immigration Task Force and a tireless advocate for immigrants before his unexpected death in February.

Relics of St. Junípero Serra, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. John Baptist Scalabrini, Our Lady of Good Harvest and St. Toribio Romo also were on display for veneration

following the Mass.

Gomez said that it was everyone's responsibility to see each person as Jesus Christ, and to recognize that everyone deserves dignity and to be treated humanely -- immigrant or not.

"We have the power to love as (God) loves," Gomez said. "We have the duty to forgive as he forgives. Let us especially ask him to give us new eyes to see that every person is someone just like us."