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Pope Francis talks with U.S. President Donald Trump during a private audience at the Vatican May 24 (CNS photo/Paul Haring).



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Pope Francis delivered dual messages to Donald Trump on his inauguration as president, urging him to reject "hatred, discrimination or exclusion" and denouncing Trump's migrant deportation plan as a "disgrace."

The pontiff delivered the back-to-back messages on Jan. 19 and Jan. 20.

The pope's brief remarks came in a Sunday night Italian television interview on the eve of Trump's inauguration for another term as president of the United States where he has vowed to evict millions of immigrants from the country.

"If it is true, it will be a disgrace, because it makes the poor wretches who have nothing pay the bill for the inequalities," said the pope of Trump's plans for widespread deportation. "It won't do."

Francis — who has become one of the most vocal global champions of migrants since his election as pontiff in 2013 — described the incoming president's plans as "not the way to solve things."

In a message delivered hours before Trump took the oath of office, Francis said, "Inspired by your nation's ideals of being a land of opportunity and welcome for all, it is my hope that under your leadership the American people will prosper and always strive to build a more just society, where there is no room for hatred, discrimination or exclusion."

Francis offered prayers for Trump's second term "that Almighty God will grant you wisdom, strength, and protection in the exercise of your high duties," the papal statement said.

"At the same time, as our human family faces numerous challenges, not to mention the scourge of war, I also ask God to guide your efforts in promoting peace and reconciliation among peoples," he said.

Trump, who was elected in November, has vowed to carry out the largest deportation program in American history.

Ahead of Trump's first term in office, in 2016, the pope suggested that the then-presidential contender was not a Christian for his plans to erect a wall blocking migrants from crossing the southern U.S. border.

"A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian," said the pope at the time.

Trump will be sworn in as president for a second term of office Jan. 20 and tentative plans are underway for a massive migrant round-up in Chicago.

In a Jan. 19 statement, Chicago's Cardinal Blase Cupich also condemned those plans as "deeply disturbing."

"The Catholic community stands with the people of Chicago in speaking out in defense of the rights of immigrants and asylum seekers," he said. "Similarly, if the reports are true, it should be known that we would oppose any plan that includes a mass deportation of U.S. citizens born of undocumented parents."

"If the indiscriminate mass deportation being reported were to be carried out, this would be an affront to the dignity of all people and communities, and deny the legacy of what it means to be an American," he stated.

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