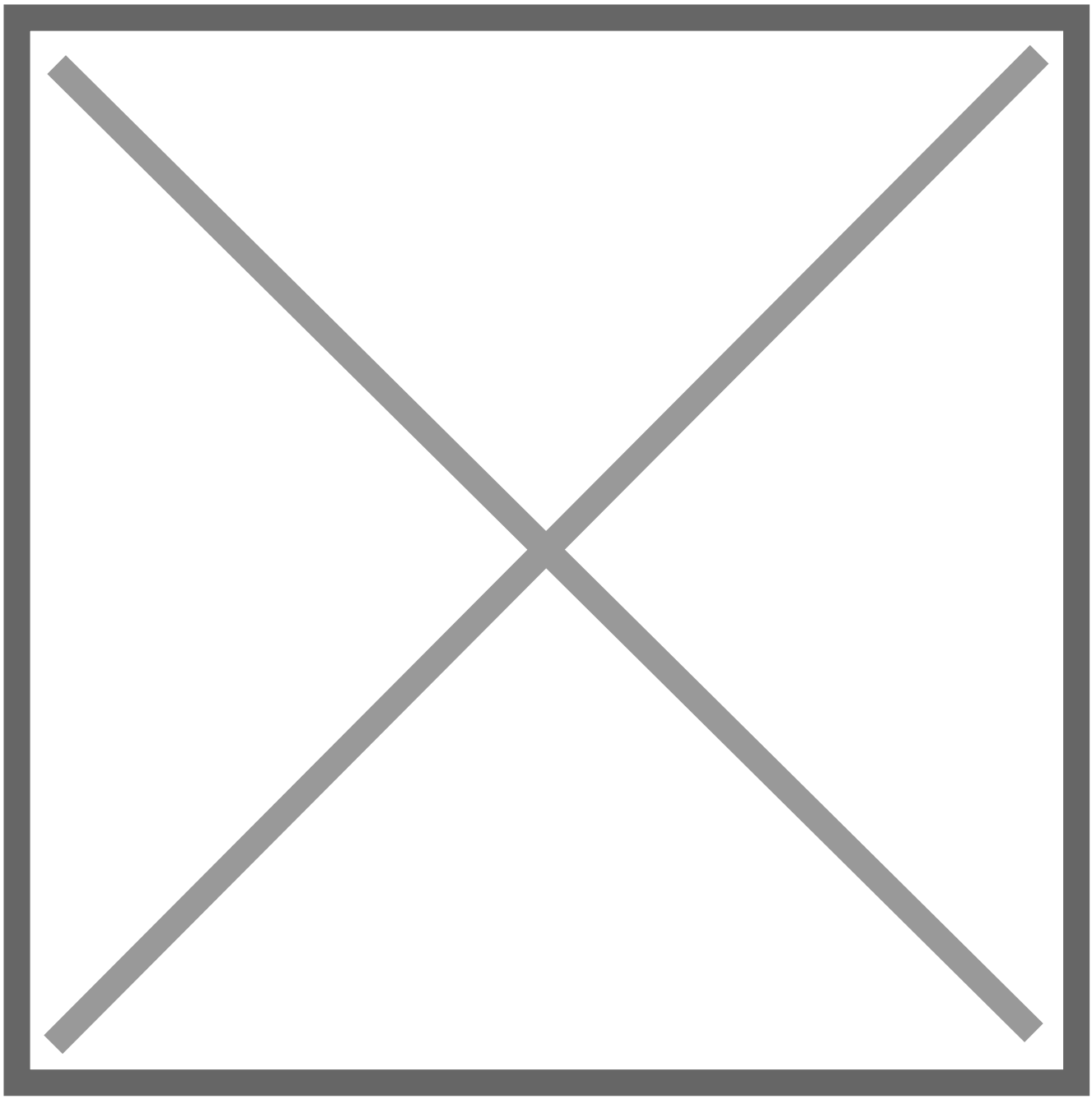
News



Student holds an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe during a Nov. 13, 2025, prayer vigil and Eucharistic procession for immigrants outside of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office in Philadelphia. The vigil was one of several held across the nation that day as part of the "One Church, One Family" initiative, a grassroots effort launched by several Catholic entities. (OSV News/Gina Christian)



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Philadelphia — November 14, 2025

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On the feast of the patron saint of immigrants — and a day after the U.S. Catholic bishops issued a special pastoral message on immigration — a coalition of Catholic organizations held a second wave of prayer vigils across the country Nov. 13 for what organizers called "a national day of public witness for our immigrant brothers and sisters."

The latest vigils — which took place on the feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian immigrant whose ministry to fellow immigrants ultimately led to her canonization as the first American saint — came amid growing concern from various faith communities and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops about the impact of the Trump administration's hardline immigration policies.

The first round of "One Church, One Family: Catholic Public Witness for Immigrants" vigils took place in multiple locations around the country on Oct. 22.

The grassroots initiative was spearheaded by the Jesuits West province, with additional sponsors including Jesuit Refugee Service USA, the Ignatian Solidarity Network, Maryknoll, the Catholic social justice lobby Network, Pax Christi USA, the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services and several orders of women religious.

"We need Mother Cabrini's intercession today," said Sr. Michelle Cimaroli, a member of the Handmaids of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, speaking Nov. 13 outside of the Philadelphia field office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Joining her at the gathering — organized by the New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia, an immigrant advocacy nonprofit based on Catholic teaching — were dozens of clergy, religious, students and other laypeople.

Participants took the USCCB's "Cabrini Pledge," named for the saint, and serving as "a reminder of our immigrant heritage and a call to deeper engagement with our faith in response to current events."

Attendees also listened to a public reading of the full text of the USCCB's Nov. 12 special pastoral message on immigration.

The message — a late addition to the agenda for the conference's annual fall meeting, which took place in Baltimore Nov. 10-13 — cited concerns over the rollback of a policy that prohibited immigration enforcement in sensitive locations, such as churches, schools and hospitals, as well as "indiscriminate mass deportation."

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The bishops also urged "meaningful reform" of U.S. immigration laws and procedures in order to balance "human dignity and national security," as Catholic teaching specifies.

After hearing the bishops' message, participants walked in a silent Eucharistic procession around the block on which the Philadelphia ICE facility is located.

Leading the procession and its concluding Benediction was Father G. Dennis Gill, rector of the Cathedral Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, and director of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Office for Divine Worship.

Gill — who lifted the monstrance over the crowds on the sidewalk and over the ICE facility — told OSV News it was "very important that the Eucharist was here today."

"Jesus gives us the invitation, rather the command, whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me. The Eucharist brings that Gospel message into the flesh," he explained. "The Lord was here for all those outside, all those inside, giving us the possibility of knowing his saving and redeeming love in his holy body and blood. And so it was important that everyone be blessed, inside and outside."

In Washington, eight Catholic organizations, their supporters, and concerned citizens gathered for a nonviolent "Prayer Vigil in Support of Our Immigrant Community" in front of ICE headquarters in that city's southwest section.

Participants were universally pleased that the USCCB had released its Nov. 12 immigration statement.

"As a church community, we always appreciate those who are in leadership taking a position; taking a clear stand," said Judy Coode, communications director of Pax Christi USA. "This is obviously an important, serious pastoral issue that we know these men have been grappling with — and we look forward to more concrete guidance and direction for our church community to work together to care for our immigrant brothers and sisters."

The prayer service included Scripture readings; a litany in which the crowd responded to invocations with, "Jesus, move us to action"; an excerpt from a homily of St. Oscar Romero, given the day before his assassination; and an excerpt from Pope Leo's message concerning the 111th World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

A "special moral appeal" was made "to political and immigration officials and agents who have devised, ordered and are carrying out ICE raids on immigrant communities across the U.S."

As it concluded, the crowd of about 75 shouted, "Stop the raids of immigrants! Stop the repression! Release all those held captive and reunite families that have been separated!"

Michele Dunne, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, said she felt the witness of St. Frances Cabrini still speaks to contemporary immigration issues.

"St. Frances Cabrini is a wonderful example of the role immigrants have played in the history of the United States, the building of the United States, and the important task of welcoming people from all over the world who come to the United States to build good lives and to be part of this society," Dunne said.

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.