News



Michele Dunne, a secular Franciscan who is executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, speaks during a prayer vigil outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Washington Dec. 12, 2025. (OSV News/Leslie E. Kossoff)

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Washington — December 12, 2025
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A prayer service outside the Washington headquarters of Immigration and Customs Enforcement* on Dec. 12, the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, paid homage to Mary as the patroness of the Americas and showed support for "our immigrant brothers and sisters," organizers told OSV News.

The feast marks how, in 1531, Our Lady of Guadalupe is said to have appeared to St. Juan Diego at Tepeyac Hill in modern-day Mexico City, later producing her image on his cloak.

As patroness of the Americas, Our Lady of Guadalupe "has been known to identify with those who are being repressed or suffering under an empire," Judy Coode, communications director for Pax Christi USA, told OSV News.

Megeen White, associate director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, echoed that sentiment.



Sr. Bridget Bearss, a sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart, of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, leads a prayer vigil outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Washington Dec. 12, 2025. The vigil, arranged by Pax Christi USA, was held on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe to honor the patroness of the Americas and show support for "our immigrant brothers and sisters," organizers said. (OSV News/Leslie E. Kossoff)

"So our purpose is focusing on Our Lady of Guadalupe, because she was a witness that God is here for all peoples, and we believe that everyone has dignity and rights, and therefore should be allowed to live peacefully," White told OSV News.

"Our faith compels us to be witnesses," Coode added. "We are witnesses to the injustices that are taking place in this country, the injustice being inflicted on those who are immigrants. And we are called to come together as people of faith."

"We are praying for just immigration laws and for the rights and dignity of all those that have been, in our opinion, illegally detained and are suffering under ICE

custody, as well as the ongoing unjust seizure of individuals and the disappearance of people," White said.

Pax Christi USA and National Advocacy Center were among sponsors of the prayer vigil. The others were Maryknoll, Franciscan Action Network, Quixote Center, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Sisters of Mercy and Network, a Catholic social justice lobby.



Charlene Howard, executive director of Pax Christi USA, leads community members during a prayer vigil outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement headquarters in Washington Dec. 12. (OSV News/Leslie E. Kossoff)

In November, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops voted overwhelmingly to issue a rare group statement voicing "our concern here for immigrants" at their annual fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

The statement, a "special pastoral message on immigration," did not name President Donald Trump, but it came as a growing number of bishops have acknowledged that

some of the Trump administration's immigration policies risk presenting the church with both practical challenges in administering pastoral support and charitable endeavors, as well as religious liberty challenges.

The statement marked the first such message from the body of bishops since 2013, when they issued their response to the federal government's contraceptive mandate in the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, stating, "We bishops stand united in our resolve to resist this heavy burden and protect our religious freedom."

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Asked about the special pastoral message on immigration, Coode said, "It's the decent thing to do. It's the right thing to do, to protect immigrants."

"[The bishops] have immigrants in their own families," she said. "They have immigrant neighbors, and they're seeing just the brutality that's taking place, and it's just outrageous."

Catholic social teaching on immigration balances three interrelated principles — the right of persons to migrate in order to sustain their lives and those of their families, the right of a country to regulate its borders and control immigration, and a nation's duty to regulate its borders with justice and mercy.

Related: US bishops show solidarity with immigrants, approve Catholic health care directives banning gender-affirming care

*This story has been updated to correct the name of the agency, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. View the full series.