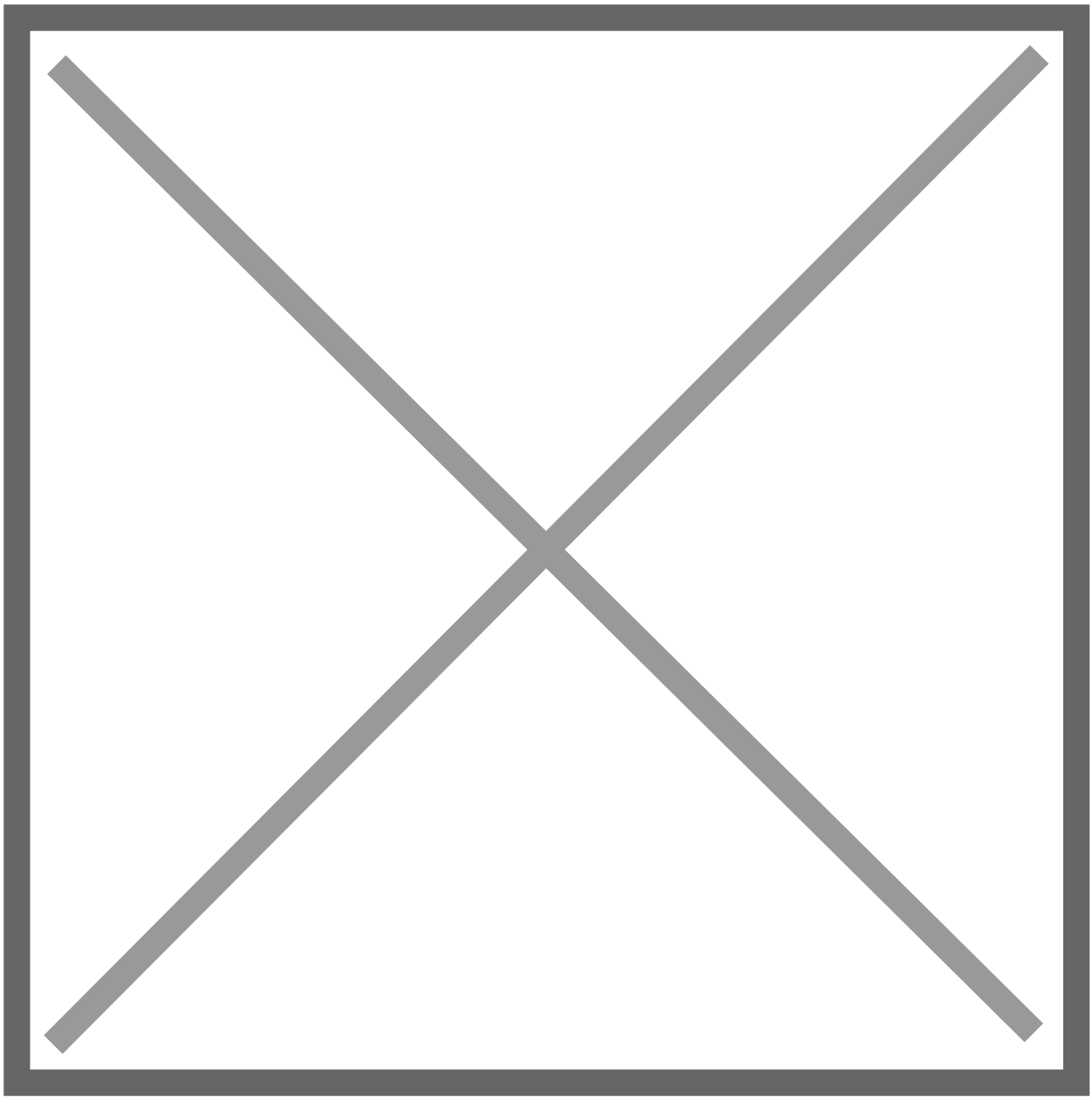
News



A U.S. federal agent smashs a car window while trying to detain a man during an immigration raid in Chicago U.S., Dec. 17, 2025. An image of Mary and the Christ Child can be seen in the driver's window. (OSV News/Reuters/Jim Vondruska)



by OSV News

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The bishops of Kentucky and Wisconsin have joined similar efforts by bishops in a growing list of states to affirm the human dignity of migrants amid debates over immigration policy.

The statements came after the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops voted overwhelmingly Nov. 12 to issue a rare group statement voicing "our concern here for immigrants" at their annual fall plenary assembly in Baltimore.

The USCCB statement 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.

A joint statement marking the feast of the Epiphany, celebrated this year on Jan. 4, was issued by the Catholic bishops of Kentucky — Archbishop Shelton Fabre of Louisville
Bishop John Iffert of Covington, Bishop John Stowe of Lexington and Bishop William Medley of Owensboro — as well as Jason Hall, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, the public policy arm of the state's bishops.

They released their statement "in continuity" with the USCCB statement, saying they wanted to direct comments to their specific communities.

"Nations have a right and responsibility to control their borders and to enforce laws meant to protect the population, but all laws must be enforced in a just and predictable manner that respects the God-given dignity of each human person," the Kentucky statement said.

It expressed concern about "the rapidly developing challenges facing immigrants, whether documented or undocumented," such as "regular reports of immigrants with legal status having that status arbitrarily revoked; increasing incidents of political leaders vilifying immigrants; the elimination of sanctuary protections for churches, hospitals, and schools; and proposals at the state level targeting the ability of immigrants to live and pursue their dreams in Kentucky, combine to create an understandable climate of hostility, anxiety, and fear."

"We oppose all efforts to stigmatize immigrants as a group or to spread fear based on national or ethnic origin," they said.

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A similar joint statement was issued Dec. 18 by the bishops of Wisconsin — Archbishop Jeffrey Grob of Milwaukee, Bishop Donald Hying of Madison, Bishop David Ricken of Green Bay, Bishop James Powers of Superior, Bishop Gerard Battersby of La Crosse, Auxiliary Bishops Jeffrey Haines and James Schuerman of Milwaukee, retired Archbishop Jerome Listecki of Milwaukee and retired Bishop William Callahan of La Crosse.

"Immigration is a profoundly complex issue," they said and reaffirmed the USCCB statement. "There is no inherent contradiction in upholding human dignity, the common good, and the rule of law." These principles can be embraced "in unity," the prelates said.

"We must acknowledge that the recent federal immigration enforcement has achieved some beneficial outcomes," their statement continued. "Violent criminals and drug dealers have been deported, and child trafficking rings have been discovered and broken up. No one would disagree that these achievements are just and necessary."

"But even good goals must be achieved in a way that is just, prudent, and proportionate," it added.

"We must also voice our strong concern regarding the indiscriminate nature of the current federal immigration enforcement," it said. "U.S. citizens are being racially profiled. Immigrants are vilified, denied pastoral care, detained in poor conditions, and parents and children are being separated. Immigrants who abided by all the

rules of the legal immigration process have lost their legal status arbitrarily.

"We see this dynamic especially in the experience of those who sought and received political asylum in the United States."

Both statements urged political leaders to seek immigration reform that upholds the dignity of migrants.

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