News



Bishop Mark J. Seitz of El Paso, Texas, Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Phoenix Bishop John P. Dolan, and Bishop James A. Misko of Tucson, Arizona, lead a procession following Border Mass 250, at Sacred Heart Church in Nogales, Arizona, June 26, 2026. (OSV News/Bob Roller)



by Anita Snow

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Nogales, Ariz. — June 30, 2026

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During a June 26 Mass just blocks north of the U.S.-Mexico border with Spanish-language hymns and prayers in English, Bishop James Misko of Tucson, the main celebrant, called on Catholics to honor the dignity of immigrants.

Seven bishops, dozens of priests and seminarians, women religious and laypeople from both countries gathered in the late afternoon at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish in Nogales for Border Mass 250, an event organized to recognize immigrants' contributions to the development of the U.S. since its 1776 founding. Afterward, scores of faithful led by a banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe prayed the rosary as they crossed the border into Nogales, Mexico.

The gathering came one day after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Trump administration can end a program temporarily protecting hundreds of thousands of Haitian and Syrian immigrants who are in the U.S. from being deported. Later that day, the court said the U.S. government can restrict the processing of asylum claims at the border.



Santa Fe Archbishop John C. Wester, in back, and Tucson Bishop James A. Misko concelebrate Border Mass 250 at Sacred Heart Church in Nogales, Arizona, June 26, 2026. (OSV News/Bob Roller)

The contentious high court rulings followed months of the American government's mass deportation campaign when Nogales served as a major deportation point and Catholic-run nonprofits have been caring for immigrants suddenly expelled from the U.S.

"We're here as shepherds and as pastors to walk with people, to listen to people, and to walk together with the people of God here at the border," said Misko, prior to the Mass, noting that to call oneself Christian means to be like Christ.

Archbishop John Wester drove from Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Bishop Mark Seitz traveled from El Paso, Texas, for the extraordinary gathering at the large Spanish-style church with a red tile roof and tall bell tower. Also participating were Bishop John Dolan of Phoenix, Bishop Enrique Sánchez Martínez of Mexicali, Mexico, and Bishop José Luis Cerra Luna of Nogales, Mexico, along with retired Tucson Bishop Gerald Kicanas.

Some participants traveled even farther to attend, such as Dominican Fr. Brendan Curran of Chicago, who represented the International Dominican Commission for Justice and Peace and the pro-immigrant community nonprofit The Resurrection Project.

"We are walking for the migrants, sharing the values and the plight of dignity that both sides suffer from," Curran said.

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Before the Mass and procession, organized by the Center for Migration Studies, the Kino Border Initiative, Hope Border Institute and the Dioceses of Phoenix and Tucson, the bishops noted the significant contributions immigrants have made to the U.S. economy and called on the U.S. Congress for comprehensive immigration reform.

"Immigrants have given our country so much for the past 250 years," said Wester. "It is time for us to give them justice, namely in the form of immigration reform which gives them a chance to become Americans and continue to make our country great."



Women pray during Border Mass 250, a binational gathering of faith, solidarity and recognition of the contributions of immigrants, at Sacred Heart Church in Nogales, Arizona. (OSV News/Bob Roller)

Misko said that "human dignity is at the very foundation of migration. People are migrating not because they want to leave their countries, but because they need to leave their countries to survive."

The 56-year-old Misko is well positioned to continue the tradition of migrant support by Catholic bishops in southern Arizona.

Appointed late last year by Pope Leo XIV, Misko was consecrated and installed on Feb. 20 at St. Augustine Cathedral in Tucson. Born in Los Angeles and raised in Texas, he is a fluent Spanish speaker who worked in restaurants before entering the seminary at age 30. At the time of his appointment, he was vicar general and moderator of the curia for the Diocese of Austin.



Prelates lead a procession following Border Mass 250, June 26, 2026, in Nogales, Arizona. Bishops led the procession to the port of entry to lead a rosary prayer and attend a prayer service at the historic Church of the Immaculate Conception, in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. (OSV News/Bob Roller)

After crossing through the metal border gates into Mexico, those who participated in the Mass paused to pray before traveling to the Kino Border Initiative's migrant shelter, where they were welcomed for dinner and conversation by executive director Joanna Williams.

Williams said that as a binational organization that cares for migrants on the southern side of the border, "we are in some ways the glue that held the different pieces of the afternoon and evening together."

"It's very appropriate that we close the day here within our shelter," said Williams, "where we welcome the people who were at the Mass and in the rosary procession, as well as the many migrants we accompany in Nogales, Sonora, who weren't able to make it to Mass."

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** and **USA 250** feature series.