

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

July 22, 2013 at 1:40pm

Pelosi thanks Catholic university heads for immigration stance

by Joshua J. McElwee

Immigration and the Church

Leaders of the nation's Catholic universities have earned the praise of Nancy Pelosi, the Catholic who leads the Democratic minority in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Following a call last Thursday by more than a third of the heads of the nation's 244 Catholic colleges and universities for Congress to pass comprehensive immigration reform, Pelosi said Monday that the academics have issued a plea for wisdom and moral courage.

"Thank you for your letter urging all Catholic Members of Congress -- and, indeed, the entire Congress -- to pass comprehensive immigration reform," Pelosi writes Monday in a letter sent to more than 90 leaders of U.S. Catholic institutions of higher learning.

"As you wrote, 'our broken immigration system' is morally indefensible," she continues. "It has long been, and remains, our moral obligation to fix it with legislation that advances our values, honors our best traditions, and respects the basic dignity of all immigrants."

Pelosi's letter comes following a previous letter from the university presidents, sent to all Catholic members of Congress, a group which also includes Republican House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio and 137 of the 432 other members.

In their letter, the presidents had said the country's current treatment of immigrants is "morally indefensible" because it "tears parents from children, traps aspiring Americans in the shadows, and undermines the best values of this nation."

The university presidents' call for reform, Pelosi writes Monday, "is rightly rooted not only in the tenets of our Catholic faith, but in our nation's history."

"We are, by and large, a nation of immigrants, built, enriched, and strengthened by each generation of newcomers to our shores," she continues. "Every wave of immigration reinvigorates our society, our culture, and our economy. Every immigrant who brings optimism, hope, and determination to our country makes America more American."

"I look forward to working together to advance the cause of commonsense, comprehensive immigration reform in the weeks and months to come," Pelosi concludes. "Thank you for your leadership and your prayers, for your appeal for compassion, and for your commitment to the common good."

Pelosi's letter was forwarded to *NCR* by Faith in Public Life, a non-profit advocacy organization, and was confirmed by the leader's press office staff. Boehner's office did not immediately respond to a message inquiring whether he would also respond to the presidents' letter.

Others who signed the university presidents' letter include the president of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and about 60 of the nation's most prominent theologians, including the heads of the two major U.S. theological societies, the Catholic Theological Society of America and the College Theology Society.

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Two former U.S. ambassadors to the Holy See also signed the letter: Thomas Melady, former president of Sacred Heart University in Connecticut who served in the role in during the administration of President George H.W. Bush, and Miguel Diaz, a theologian at the University of Dayton who stepped down in November.

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Following is Pelosi's letter to the Catholic college and university presidents.

Leader Pelosi's Letter Responding to Catholic University Presidents by [joshua_mac8430](#)

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