

Archbishop Vigneron,

It has been such an honor to have you here today speaking to our Cristo Rey community. Many of us here are Hispanic, or have close ties to immigrants and we want to share that these past few weeks have been specifically difficult for us.

Yet, your presence here reminds us that the compassion, solidarity, and unity we have shown one another is simply another way in which we uphold our Catholic faith.

In this difficult time, we have learned that, as Catholics, we are called by Scripture to be there for one another. For that reason, we are sincerely thankful for the support the Catholic Church has shown toward our immigrant community. From being at the forefront of the *Drive SAFE Bills* to spreading a message of support through the Pastoral Note to Migrants released by the Catholic bishops of Michigan, your leadership has been invaluable.

However, while we are grateful for that support, we now find ourselves grappling with an increasing sense of fear and unease. As we look around, we see the toll of harsh immigration policies and rhetoric not only in news headlines and vicious tweets, but in our everyday lives. Local stores are closed; once-bustling corners are now silent; and our libraries, churches, and food banks stand empty, all out of fear. I think of our parents and neighbors, who, despite their fear, continue to work long hours to support our families. As well as our classmates, who may be unsure of what their future will look like.

We are sharing this with you today because we want to highlight that the struggles of immigrants are not just statistics, or distant issues, there are entire communities being affected by this and we are only one of them.

As Catholics, we know that authentic faith cannot exist in isolation from justice. As you know, the Church has long held a commitment to the dignity of the human person, and that commitment demands action. We can't stand here and listen to our president demand that churches, a central place of community worship, comply with ICE raids and family separations. We can't stand here and passively witness as immigrants are dehumanized and demonized. We can't stand here and listen as our loved ones are called "criminals", "aliens", and "invaders". We can't stand here and listen as our vice president defames the hard work that the Catholic Church has done through Catholic Charities for our immigrant community.

Our Jesus tells us to welcome the stranger, to show mercy and compassion, and to love the foreigner as oneself. And there isn't a time more crucial to do this than right now. We hope that you will continue to stand firm against the cruel treatment of immigrants.

In the Pastoral Note to Migrants created by the Catholic bishops of Michigan, there is a proposal for an immigration system from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that upholds dignity, compassion, and equality. This proposal consists of creating generous pathways to citizenship, protecting the vulnerable, keeping families together,

welcoming refugees, and more. As a Cristo Rey community, our final ask is this: How will the Archdiocese of Detroit work to ensure that our churches and schools are safe and protected from ICE? How will the Archdiocese take tangible action to advocate for the policies and principles that will bring us closer to the immigration system proposed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops?

In Peace and Solidarity,

The Detroit Cristo Rey Circle of Support

