

MESSAGE FROM THE MOST REV. ROBERT MCELROY

Bishop of San Diego

For the Catholic community, the Gospel mandate to "welcome the stranger" is a searing responsibility, not only in our personal lives, but also in guiding our efforts to create a just society in a world filled with suffering and turmoil.

For this reason, the historic identity of the United States as a safe haven for refugees fleeing war and persecution is for American Catholics both a source of justifiable pride and unswerving religious commitment, even as we recognize that at shameful moments in our national history prejudice, fear and ignorance have led our country to abandon that identity.

This week is just such a shameful moment of abandonment for the United States.

The executive order signed by President Trump on Friday professes to be a necessary step in securing the safety of Americans. But both the design of the order and its chaotic implementation unmask the reality that this Presidential order arose not from a careful effort to balance the needs of security with our commitment to welcome refugees amidst the greatest refugee crisis since World War II. Rather, this executive order is the introduction into law of campaign sloganeering rooted in xenophobia and religious prejudice. And its devastating consequences are already apparent for those suffering most in our world, for our standing among nations, and for the imperative of rebuilding unity within our country rather than tearing us more apart.

This week the Statue of Liberty handed off its torch to other lands in a presidential action which repudiates our national heritage and ignores the reality that Our Lord and the Holy Family were themselves Middle Eastern refugees fleeing government oppression. We cannot stand silent.

The Most Rev. Robert McElroy
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