



Archbishop discusses National Migration Week

January 7, 2009

The feast of the Epiphany, Jan. 4, begins the annual National Migration Week for the Catholic Church. This year's theme is *Renewing Hope, Seeking Justice*. The issue of immigration is important to our country. It was a hot topic before the elections yet during the campaign season it was barely debated. I hope that it will become a matter of great and fervent discussion during the next congress. This is matter of justice to both U.S. citizens and to immigrants.

Our Church stands on the side of orderly immigration and is in favor of comprehensive immigration reform so our borders are protected and all people are respected. Both of those principles are very important for a Catholic understanding of migration, which is ultimately rooted in the Christian belief that we are all migrants in search of our heavenly homeland.

National Migration Week is a time for us to think about how important immigration has been for our country. Most of us are the children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren of immigrants. And so it has been a part of our country's richness that people come here with many gifts from many different places. Not unlike the magi who came to Jesus from a different place bringing rich gifts. It is important for us to recognize that immigration has made our country prosperous. I don't speak of economic prosperity but of the cultural wealth that our diversity brings.

America is a country of immigrants. Our heritage and our Christian faith demand that we look for a just solution to the problems of our immigration system today. Our reaction to immigration must not be one of hostility to the immigrant. We must understand that our country has a duty to protect its borders; a duty to welcome those who migrate legally; and a responsibility to fairly address the inadequacies of immigration laws and policies that have allowed millions of unauthorized, yet hardworking, honest immigrants to risk living and working in the shadows of our society.

Now is the time for *Renewing Hope and Seeking Justice* in immigration reform. We must urge our new leaders to make immigration laws and develop policies that are just and fair, both good for our country and respectful of the dignity of all peoples.