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Bishop of Gary

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In unison with many other bishops and religious leaders around the country, I voice my concerns about the recent executive order to turn away refugees from certain countries and also the proposal to build a wall along the entire U.S./Mexican border. While every country has both the right and responsibility to secure its borders and protect its people from violence and terrorism, these sweeping actions go too far, upending the lives of many people who have legitimate documents to reside here in the United States and turning away refugees, particularly Muslims, who are fleeing violence at home.

The United States has always been a nation of immigrants which welcomes those seeking peace, opportunity, freedom and religious liberty. The millions of people who have settled here contribute their culture, religious belief, work and values to the common good and we are richer for it. Here in Northwest Indiana, many of our priests, sisters, brothers and lay people are from other countries, drawn here by the Lord to make their contribution both to the Church and our local communities. Both our American and Catholic values call us to welcome the stranger, heal those who suffer and offer hope to those who live in despair. Accepting refugees who come to our shores seeking safety is both the humane and Christian thing to do.

As I said in the January 8, 2017 NWI Catholic column, "The Church will certainly stand with families who could potentially risk the tragedy of suffering division, parents potentially being deported whose children are United States citizens and only have lived in this country. The Church stands with political and religious refugees whose forced return to their homelands could result in persecution or death. The Church wants to help those seeking to escape a crushing poverty whose misery most of us can only imagine."

In his statement on the recent executive order, Cardinal Cupich of Chicago quotes Pope Francis, "If we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us."

Most Reverend Donald J. Hying
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