



Diocese of Newark

The Episcopal Church in Northern New Jersey

The Right Reverend Carlye J. Hughes, Bishop of Newark

94 E. Mt. Pleasant Ave., Livingston, NJ 07039 • 973-430-9976 • chughes@dioceseofnewark.org

June 5, 2026

Feast of Boniface

Dear Companions on the Journey,

One of the challenges of our country's immigration crisis is responding to mass deportation. We are not the first Americans in this position; the United States has mandated mass deportations many times. For some this is a political issue and guided by party affiliation. For others this is a moral issue met by humanitarian values or philosophical positions. For Christians this is a religious issue. Our faith informs how we think, respond, and live with the reality of mass deportations.

All humankind is part of God's creation and wonderfully made in God's image. No one is left out and no one is forgotten. All are beloved by God and endowed with a dignity that is a direct result of the Divine One who brought us into being. Additionally, God gave us the responsibility to care for the earth and all its inhabitants. We do this, with God's help, by loving our neighbor.

The disturbing reality of mass deportation is the dehumanization of large groups of diverse people. The simple word "illegal" became a way to belittle, disrespect, and deny the dignity God has given to all people. We have a long history of using names to dehumanize people as a precursor to treating them as less than human. Moving indigenous people off their lands, enslaving generations of Africans, and marginalizing immigrants were outcomes that began with dehumanizing language.

Thankfully, the posture, position, and practice of loving our neighbors disrupts dehumanization. We are doing this in specific ways in our diocese:

- Our clergy support and accompany members of our congregations with immigration court appointments and provide pastoral support for their families.
- We began raising awareness and financial support for our Hispanic parishes during Confirmation season, and that work continues. Congregations serving Hispanic communities have suffered a loss of attendance and income while meeting the demand for rapidly increasing pastoral care needs. The Supreme Court's decision to allow racial profiling has made their members more vulnerable to immigration enforcement regardless of immigration status. The ministry of these parishes is a vital lifeline during this crisis. Donations can be made on the diocesan website (dioceseofnewark.org/support-immigrant-ministries).
- We are collaborating with other organizations and dioceses for advocacy, humane immigration enforcement, and a justice-based approach to immigration reform.

- We maintain a regular presence at the Delaney Hall ICE detention center. We gather there for prayer, pastoral care to families and volunteers, and in solidarity with the detained and their families who have a God given right to justice and dignity.

We have learned many ways to love our neighbor through Covid, racial killings, deep political divisions, and now mass deportations. As always, we hold to the command of Jesus to love our neighbor and the Baptismal Covenant's refrain that we will do this with God's help.

Grace and peace,

The Rt. Rev. Carlye J. Hughes

Bishop of Newark