



SAINT THOMAS MORE  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

March 27, 2017

St. Thomas More Catholic Community, a parish entrusted to the care of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) by the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, believes that the dignity of all human beings must be respected. *We declare that undocumented persons in our community deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, and justice.*

The Catholic Church, Pope Francis, and the Society of Jesus have long advocated for immigration reform in the United States. St. Thomas More and its predecessor parishes, Immaculate Heart of Mary and St. Luke's, have a lengthy history of working with undocumented persons as advocates and supporters. St. Thomas More underwent an extensive discernment process to determine what our parish should do to support the immigrant population here in the Twin Cities and nationally.

As part of St. Thomas More's discernment process, the parish held three discernment sessions open to all community members, established four working groups to research answers to questions raised in these sessions, provided a draft statement on sanctuary to parishioners and an opportunity to comment, and discussed the research and parish feedback with parish leadership. Many themes emerged.

Our community acknowledges and respects the federal government's obligation to protect our borders and uphold our immigration laws. Nevertheless, we agree with the U.S. Catholic Bishops Conference that immigration principles should always be at the service of human dignity and the common good of society. St. Thomas More is committed to increasing its advocacy for just and humane immigration reform at both the local and national level. To that end, St. Thomas More commits to the following:

- Advocating for justice for immigrants on both a local and national level;
- Offering spaces on our campus for organizers, lawyers, and community members to meet;
- Listening and responding to the best of our ability to the call and needs of our immigrant brothers and sisters;
- Gathering for communal prayer to continually discern the movement of the Spirit in our work, action, and lives; and
- Developing a robust referral program to put those asking for help and guidance in contact with local agencies able to provide that help and guidance.

As part of the discernment process, it was clear to parish leadership that a majority of the responders in our community feel called to participate in more immediate action than advocacy alone can provide. Many feel a biblical and theological call to act like the Good Samaritan who provided shelter, financial support and comfort to a stranger in need or the innkeeper who offered Mary and Joseph a place to rest after a long journey. We also recognize that what seems like an insurmountable burden to a handful of individuals can be overcome by a parish community with collective resources.

As a result of our community's responses, St. Thomas More will give its members the opportunity to support a sanctuary effort whereby the community opens space within our Parish Center for persons facing deportation, especially where deportation would separate parents from their children or would separate people brought to the United States as children from the only homes they have ever truly known. To that end, St. Thomas More commits to creating an Implementation Team that will do the following:

- Devise a plan for safely welcoming undocumented persons into our community and communal spaces;
- Marshal independent financial resources to the extent possible to support the sanctuary effort;
- Provide training for staff and volunteers on best practices for safely and lawfully welcoming undocumented persons into our community; and
- Work with parish leadership to minimize insurance, financial, and legal risks to our community.

We believe that our efforts are a calling of our faith and a reflection of who we are as a Jesuit parish. We respect all parishioners' right to participate in advocacy and sanctuary efforts to the degree their personal discernments dictate.

We pray with the patron of our parish, St. Thomas More, "Oh Lord, give us the grace to work for the things we pray for."

Fr. Warren Sazama, S.J.  
Pastor, STMCC

Dr. Sarah Mullins, Ph.D.  
Chair, Pastoral Council