

Statement of Bishop Eusebio Elizondo
Mission for Migrants
April 1, 2014

I am happy to join with Cardinal O'Malley and my brother bishops today on this sacred ground, which is, tragically, the final resting ground for many of our brothers and sisters. As chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration, I call today upon Congress to act this year on immigration reform. We can no longer stand idly by as our brothers and sisters are subject to smugglers, human traffickers, drug traffickers, and the dangers of the desert.

It is a moral imperative that Congress act this year. Each day, families are being divided by deportations, with as many as 100,000 U.S.-citizen children being separated from their parents each year. Is this how we invest in these young citizens – the future leaders of our nation? No doubt we are undermining their trust in America when their own government – whose purpose is to protect these children – takes their father or mother away. There is a large social cost to inaction, a price we pay in this country every day and will pay into the future.

Family unity also extends across the border. We do not think of the untold number of children who see their fathers and mothers leave for the United States each day in Mexico and countries south. In fact, we see a record number of these children traveling the dangerous journey north to find their families as protection from the rising violence in their home countries. We must look at the root causes of migration in this hemisphere – both violence and poverty – and pursue long-term strategies that allow families to remain home and live in safety and dignity.

We are here today in solidarity with those who have died and continue to risk their lives in support of their families. We are hopeful that the President, Congress and the American public will heed our call for reform. Support for immigration reform – already at record highs among the American public – will only grow. We stand ready to work with members on both sides of the aisle in the House of Representatives to find a solution to our broken system this year.

Thank you.