

Statement of Bishop John C. Wester
Mission for Migrants
April 1, 2014

I would like to echo Cardinal O'Malley and Bishop Elizondo.

Our strength as a nation is drawn from our diversity and the unique talents of persons from around the world. Under our current system, we are weakening our country, not strengthening it. By not acting, we are alienating a generation of young persons, who are the future leaders of our country. We are saying “we do not want you or your families.”

There is, then, much more at stake in this debate than the next election. The outcome of this debate—whether it be no action or, hopefully, passage of a bill---will set the tone for the rest of this century. Either we can choose to turn away from our heritage and our track record of integrating immigrants from around the world, or we can embrace it.

Our elected officials are sent to Washington, D.C., not to worry about their next election, but to lead our nation into the future. We are seeing little leadership or statesmanship in Congress these days. This does not apply to one political party, but to both together.

As Cardinal O'Malley mentioned, at Lampedusa, Pope Francis talked about a “globalization of indifference” in the world to the plight of the migrant. This “indifference” is manifesting itself in the United States by our inability to create a humane immigration system. It is a stain on the soul of our nation.

Thank you.