



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Archbishop Jackels makes statement on president's DACA decision

The President has terminated the DACA program, which addressed the situation of people without legal status who were brought to this country as minors. As a result, Dreamers, as the people affected are called, fear deportation, have to put plans for the future on hold, and maybe even feel betrayed by the only country they know.

Why should Catholics be concerned about this? A number of reasons come to mind:

1. The God-given dignity of every person – made in the image of God, regarded as children of God – is not given due respect in the way Dreamers are being treated.
2. It ignores the principles for a just society articulated by Catholic social teaching, such as the right to life and to the things needed to live in dignity, including protection from harm all the way from the womb to the tomb, and devotion to the common good.
3. It represents a one-sided approach to human rights and duties. For example, Catholic social teaching recognizes the right of a nation to secure its borders, but also its duty to have a reasonable policy to receive immigrants, as well as the right of people to emigrate.
4. It doesn't reflect what Jesus taught through his response to the Pharisees, that the rule of law has to consider the real-life circumstances of people, or it results in treatment that is inhumane, without compassion, lacking in mercy.

Why are we doing this? Anyone who knows immigrants – legal or not – will attest that they are God-fearing, Church-going, family-oriented, hard-working, community-building people. For the rule of law we are doing this, really?

Laws are important. Laws represent the behavior expected of responsible citizens in a just society. But laws can be bad, broken, or unfairly applied. When they are, like our present immigration laws, they need to be corrected accordingly.

What can we do? Pray to God for the poor people affected by the termination of the DACA program, for all immigrants, and for lawmakers, that with wisdom and courage they can agree on a legislative solution in a timely manner.

We can also write our legislators, urging them to find a way to fix a broken law, or be ready to find a different job after the next election cycle.

And each of us can ensure that the practice of our Catholic Faith includes advocating for the right to life of all people and their right to the things needed to live in dignity, including protection from harm all the way from the womb to the tomb, as well as devotion to the common good.

May God have mercy on us, and help us.

Michael O. Jackels

Archbishop of Dubuque

1229 Mount Loretta Avenue • Dubuque, Iowa
52003-7286 Phone (563) 556-2580 •
www.DBQArch.org

