



## THE DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

---

January 24, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

On Christmas Eve, our Holy Father opened the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica inaugurating the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope. Indeed, Christ is our Hope and in Him we place our personal hopes for the year ahead. Yet, amid this call to hope, many of our brothers and sisters on the margins are experiencing great fear and anxiety. I am thinking in particular of our immigrant communities.

Much has been said of what might happen to some of our neighbors beginning in the coming weeks and months. As people of hope, it is important that we do what is right and necessary to instill confidence in those who are afraid, letting them know that the Church is with them.

As the Body of Christ, we serve those in need, respecting and promoting the inherent dignity of every person who arrives on our doorstep. At the same time, parishes, schools and entities of the Diocese of Belleville must adhere to federal, state and local laws and regulations.

The Diocese of Belleville is working with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities, state and local governments and other groups to coordinate our activities of support across the 28 counties of the Diocese. Please find a collection of resources at the Archdiocese of Chicago website: [https://pvm.archchicago.org/Immigrant Assistance Resources - Parish Vitality and Mission](https://pvm.archchicago.org/ImmigrantAssistanceResources-ParishVitalityandMission)

Speaking this year to the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, the Holy Father observed that migration governance needs to balance regulation with human rights and dignity., "We are quick to forget that we are dealing with people with faces and names." Pope Francis has also been clear that "the principle of safe and voluntary repatriation of those who are forced to flee must be strictly adhered to. No one should be repatriated to a country where they could face severe human rights violations or even death."

Let us continue to work together in this spirit and be faith-filled instruments of mercy honoring the human dignity of all persons.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael McGovern  
Bishop of Belleville

**Office of the Bishop**  
222 South Third - Belleville, Illinois 62220 - 1985  
Phone: (618) 277-8181 Ext. 1081 - Fax: (618) 277-0387  
E-mail: [bmcgovern@diobelle.org](mailto:bmcgovern@diobelle.org)