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January 14, 2018

To the Faithful of the Diocese of Oakland

Dear brothers and sisters,

I write to you today regarding the recent decision by the Trump administration to rescind Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for approximately 200,000 El Salvadorans living in the United States.

This action by our president is heartbreaking. I am particularly troubled we are disrupting the lives of people who immigrated here legally under an order signed by President Bush in 2001. They are upstanding citizens who, every 18 months, pay to undergo a required vetting process to keep their permit active. They are homeowners, hard workers, and taxpayers whose children are U.S. citizens. They are contributing to the communities in which they live here in the U.S., and supporting their family members who stayed behind in El Salvador, a country still unstable and rocked by violence.

More than 190,000 US-born children have at least one parent who will lose legal status due to the administration's decision. Going back to a dangerous environment could have fatal consequences; if they choose to stay and lose immigration status they will be at immediate risk of deportation.

Our Catholic Charities of East Bay recommends all affected schedule a legal screening to identify potential remedies. Their services are provided by Board of Immigration Appeals accredited representatives and licensed immigration attorneys. People seeking help should call 510.768.3100 or visit [www.cceb.org/our-services/immigration-legal-services/](http://www.cceb.org/our-services/immigration-legal-services/). Our diocesan Office for Life and Justice at 510.267.8379 or [chernandez@oakdiocese.org](mailto:chernandez@oakdiocese.org) has more information and ways each of us can be involved.

Pope Francis reminded us in his message for the World Day of Migrants, which is ironically January 14, "Our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate."

I encourage all of us to join efforts in seeking a better solution to this situation. Please also contact your Senator and Representative. We believe all people have the right to migrate to protect their lives and their families. While the Church recognizes the right of nations to regulate their borders, this right must be exercised with mercy and justice and balanced with immigrants' rights to human dignity and life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Barber S.J." with a small cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Michael C. Barber, SJ  
Bishop of Oakland

*For the greater glory of God*