



ARCHDIOCESE
of DETROIT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2026

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Contact:

Holly Fournier, Archdiocese of Detroit fournier.holly@aod.org
Isabella Agby, Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan agby@ccsem.org
Astrid Liden, Hope Border Institute aliden@hopeborder.org
Rachel Reyes, Center for Migration Studies rreyes@cmsny.org

Catholic Church in Detroit hosts major regional gathering, ‘Witness to Hope: Pastoral Care of Immigrant Communities’

DETROIT, MI — On Wednesday, May 6, 2026, the Archdiocese of Detroit, in partnership with Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan, the Hope Border Institute (HOPE) in El Paso, TX and the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS), convened regional faith leaders for a daylong summit on immigration at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, Michigan.

The program featured workshops and strategy sessions on Catholic teaching on migration, the current policy landscape and practical responses to mass deportations, including guidance on sensitive locations, communications and accompaniment of affected families. Over 200 participants from the Dioceses of Detroit, Gaylord, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Saginaw, Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo and Youngstown attended, including Archbishop Edward J. Weisenburger and Bishop Jeffrey M. Monforton (Detroit), Bishop Earl Boyea (Lansing), Bishop Jeffrey Walsh (Gaylord) as well as Bishop David John Walkowiak (Grand Rapids).

The Archbishop of Detroit, the Most Reverend Edward J. Weisenburger stressed the Church's prophetic responsibility on immigration. ‘All across the nation, the Catholic Church is looking into issues related to immigration and how migrants are being treated and mistreated so often — I’ve had a lot of personal interactions with immigrants during my time in Arizona. However, this is not just a [southern] border issue, but also an issue that matters here locally. The most important thing the Church can do in Michigan is to continue to be prophetic. To get a clear, honest perspective viewed from the gospel of Jesus Christ is a service not just to our people, but to our whole state and our entire nation.’

The Detroit gathering was part of the Catholic Immigration Prophetic Action Project (Catholic IMMpact), a national initiative led by HOPE and CMS to strengthen the Church’s advocacy and pastoral response on behalf of migrants and refugees. The Detroit meeting follows recent regional Catholic IMMpact events in Providence, Rhode Island and Phoenix, Arizona.



ARCHDIOCESE
of DETROIT



HOPE



CMS
CENTER FOR
MIGRATION
STUDIES

Recent enforcement activity has placed many immigrant families at risk across the region. CMS estimates that nearly 151,000 children in Michigan and Ohio live in mixed-status households, and mass deportations could leave nearly 80,000 of these children separated from a parent. Approximately 19% of Michigan's and 26% of Ohio's foreign-born residents have a vulnerable immigration status. In both states, undocumented individuals participate in the labor force at higher rates than the state averages (72% vs. 62% in Michigan; 75% vs. 64% in Ohio).

'The families we serve at Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan are our neighbors — people who came here from across the world to build lives, contribute to our communities, and raise their children in hope,' **said Paul Propson, CEO of Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan.** 'We help them learn English, enter the workforce, and navigate the complex legal process of securing their place in this country and reuniting with their loved ones. Convenings like this one give us the chance to learn from one another, strengthen our response, and recommit ourselves to the call we share as Catholics — to welcome the stranger and protect the vulnerable.'

'The strong turnout for the regional gathering in Detroit demonstrates the commitment of parishioners and diocesan leaders to defend the dignity of migrants and refugees and to mount a coordinated response to mass deportations,' said **Cory Smith, Community Engagement Specialist for Catholic IMMpact.** 'Community members are standing with the most vulnerable and working to shape an immigration system that promotes public safety, protects human rights, supports economic growth and honors our nation's immigrant heritage.'

[Photo Visuals](#) (Credit: Valaurian Waller for Detroit Catholic)
[More About the Initiative](#)

###

The Archdiocese of Detroit encompasses six counties in southeast Michigan: Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Lapeer, St. Clair, and Monroe and is home to 900,000 Catholics. With a Catholic presence dating back to 1701, the Diocese of Detroit was established in 1833 and elevated to an archdiocese in 1937. On March 18, 2025, Archbishop Edward J. Weisenburger was installed as the tenth bishop and sixth archbishop of Detroit, succeeding Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron, who retired after serving as Archbishop of Detroit for 16 years. Learn more at aod.org

Compelled by the love and teaching of Jesus Christ, **Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan (CCSEM)** is a faith-based, nonprofit organization that provides a broad spectrum of health and human services to people in need across Lapeer, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, and Wayne Counties — the six counties of the Archdiocese of Detroit. Inspired by Catholic social



ARCHDIOCESE
of DETROIT



HOPE



CMS
CENTER FOR
MIGRATION
STUDIES

teaching, CCSEM serves the most vulnerable in our communities, offering help and hope to thousands each year regardless of faith, race, or background. Learn more at ccsem.org.

The **Hope Border Institute (HOPE)** is the premier strategy center for faith leaders pursuing justice at the US-Mexico border. Through a robust program of research and policy work, leadership development and action, we work to build justice and deepen solidarity across the borderlands. Learn more at www.hopeborder.org.

The **Center for Migration Studies (CMS)** is a New York-based educational institute devoted to the study of international migration, to the promotion of understanding between immigrants and receiving communities, and to public policies that safeguard the dignity and rights of migrants, refugees, and newcomers. For more information, please visit www.cmsny.org.