



Office of the Bishop  
PHONE: (702) 735-9605  
FAX: (702) 735-8941

January 20, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today I wish to bring to your attention an important statement<sup>1</sup> issued by the Most Reverend José H. Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.<sup>2</sup> Archbishop Gomez issued this statement on the occasion of the Inauguration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., now 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America. Archbishop Gomez pledges the prayers of the Catholic Community for our new President and his family, asking God to grant Mr. Biden the wisdom and courage he needs to lead our nation during these trying and tumultuous times.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Biden made a passionate plea for every American to unite with him “. . . to fight the common foes we face: anger, resentment, hatred. Extremism, lawlessness, violence. Disease, joblessness, hopelessness.” He asked us to look ahead “. . . in our uniquely American way – restless, bold, optimistic – and set our sights on the nation we know we can be and must be.”

At the same time, we as Catholics must be aware that beyond aspirational words and inspirational rhetoric, we must remain vigilant and ever-watchful as we move into the future together.

In the words of Archbishop Gomez, “Working with President Biden will be unique, however, as he is our first President in 60 years to profess the Catholic Faith.”

Archbishop Gomez underscores the reality that we are living in a time of growing and aggressive secularism in American culture, “. . . when religious believers face many challenges, it will be refreshing”, writes Archbishop Gomez, “to engage with a President, who clearly understands, in a deep and personal way, the importance of religious faith and institutions.”

That having been said, we must recognize “. . . that our new President has pledged to pursue certain policies that would advance moral evils and threaten human life and dignity, most seriously in the areas of abortion, contraception, marriage, and gender.

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of Archbishop Gomez’ statement may be found [HERE](#).

<sup>2</sup> A Spanish version of the Archbishop’s statement may also be found [HERE](#).

Of deep concern is the liberty of the Church and the freedom of believers to live according to their consciences.

Our commitments on issues of human sexuality and of the family, as with our commitments in every other area – such as abolishing the death penalty or seeking a health care system and economy that truly serves the human person – are guided by Christ’s great commandment to love and to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters, most especially the vulnerable.”

In the Diocese of Las Vegas, we also raise concern over the plight of the undocumented seeking the legal path to citizenship, and all those residing on the margins of our culture and society.

It is important to underscore the fact that Catholic bishops cannot be partisan players in our nation’s politics.

When we speak on issues impacting public life, we try to guide consciences through sound theological principles that are based upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the hallowed social and moral teachings of the Church.

Archbishop Gomez and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have urgently requested the opportunity to begin a fruitful and sincere dialogue with the President and his Administration in order to address complicated cultural, social, moral, and economic issues that affect the lives of every American, regardless of political or religious persuasion.

Indeed, President Biden’s call for national unity and healing is welcomed on all levels. It is particularly needed at this time, when we are confronting the trauma that has been precipitated by the Coronavirus pandemic, and the subsequent reality of social isolation, economic turmoil, joblessness, homelessness, and displacement affecting so many of our beloved parishioners.

Archbishop Gomez said it well in his pastoral statement, “As believers, we understand that healing is a gift that we can only receive from the hand of God. We know too, that real reconciliation requires patient listening to those who disagree with us and a willingness to forgive and move beyond desires for reprisal.”

We, the pastoral leaders and parishioners of the Diocese of Las Vegas, pledge our prayers for our new President and his Administration, asking President Biden to have a special solidarity with the poor, the vulnerable, the unborn, the dying, and to be influenced by the faith he professes, a faith that is founded upon God’s tender love for the least, the last, and the lowliest in our community. Echoing the words of Archbishop

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Gomez, "I pray that God will give our new President, and all of us, the grace to seek the common good with all sincerity."

We entrust all our hopes and anxieties in this new moment to the tender heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ and Patroness of the United States. "May she guide us in the ways of peace and obtain for us wisdom and the grace of a true patriotism and love of country."

Asking God's abundant blessings upon each and every one of you I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "George Leo Thomas".

Most Reverend George Leo Thomas, Ph.D.  
Bishop, Diocese of Las Vegas