For Immediate Release

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Immigration Reform
Archbishop expresses cautious optimism on compromise plan

(Seattle) Archbishop Alex J. Brunett, who has scheduled a “Mass for Immigrants” at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 26 at St. Mary Church, Seattle, said he is cautiously optimistic that the announced compromise between Congress and the President will result in “just and comprehensive reform” of the nation’s immigration laws.

“The news of an agreement to resolve the impasse on immigration reform is welcome,” said Archbishop Brunett. “But the real test of the plan will be its protection of basic rights.”

Archbishop Alex J. Brunett will celebrate a bilingual “Mass for Immigrants” at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 26 at St. Mary Church, Seattle, 611 20th Ave. South. Auxiliary Bishops Eusebio Elizondo and Joseph Tyson will concelebrate the Mass with Archbishop Brunett, which is being offered in prayerful support of just and humane treatment of all immigrants.

Archbishop Brunett and the bishops of Washington State called for comprehensive immigration reform in August 2006 (Call to Unity: Justice in Immigration Policies) that includes legal pathways to family reunification, guest-worker status and citizenship.

The Archbishop sent guidelines for assisting immigrants to priests this week with emphasis on those who are undocumented. The guidelines state that parishes of the archdiocese may provide bail to those in a legal process of deportation in order to reunite families, assistance to those in a legal process of naturalization or deportation, and assistance for family members separated because of deportation.

The Archbishop’s letter added that parishes of the archdiocese should not conceal the whereabouts of undocumented persons from legal authorities.

“We support the enforcement of our laws,” Archbishop Brunett said. “But while we do not support illegal immigration, the Archdiocese of Seattle has a long-standing tradition of outreach to immigrants and refugees. It is integral to our faith and teaching that we provide food, shelter and material assistance to those in need.

“When we gather this Saturday we will pray that Congress and the President reach full agreement on a reform plan that protects the basic human rights and dignity of immigrants and ensures family unity and a just path to citizenship,” Archbishop Brunett said.

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