

Los Angeles archbishop, civic leaders announce fast for immigration reform

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 27, 2013

On Tuesday, Los Angeles Archbishop Jose Gomez gathered a group of civic and labor leaders in a chapel at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels to announce they will conduct a 24-hour fast between Dec. 1-3 in solidarity with the Fast for Families pro-immigration reform group, which is entering the third week of its fast on the National Mall in Washington.

"In the Jewish and Christian traditions, fasting is a spiritual sign of penance and a way for us to show our solidarity with those in need," Gomez told the group in the Chapel of the Relic of the Tilma of St. Juan Diego. "Fasting is an outward sign of interior conversion -- a conversion of our heart. And that's what we need in our country today. We need a conversion of hearts. Everyone knows our immigration system is broken. But our leaders don't seem to feel enough urgency to fix it. So we offer our fasting today as a prayer -- in the hopes of moving the hearts of our national leaders in Washington."

Gomez invited all parishioners from the 4.4-million member archdiocese to join the fast.

"What we are doing here today is very little," he said. "We know that. But we do it with love -- love for God and love for those he loves, the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. Our little acts of acts of sacrifice and self-denial have great spiritual power. So we're inviting everyone to fast and pray for immigration reform. Let us share our bread with the hungry. And let us make our voices heard for those who have no one to speak for them."

Gomez was joined by labor leader Maria Elena Duraso; Alan Rothenberg, chairman of the LA Chamber of Commerce; LA County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas; former Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis; and Congressman Henry Waxman, D-Los Angeles.

The Fast for Families on the National Mall has asked people throughout the country to join "solidarity fasts" in support. Last week, Vice President Joe Biden visited those fasting, and the week previously, Bishop John Wester of Salt Lake City came to voice his support.

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