



# Catholic Charities

Archdiocese of San Antonio, Inc.

Thank you for allowing me to say a few words on what is a very important process, the US Census.

There is a great concern as to the nature of the process and whether there is a real desire to locate and register everyone in the country. I would like to separate for a moment the political issue of documented or undocumented peoples. It is widely understood that people come from all over the world to the United States looking for a better way of life. Regardless of how they get there, they eventually marry US citizens and have children who are US citizens. These spouses and children are guaranteed under the law, the access to benefits approved by the government.

The census is critical to the federal distribution of funds for allowed benefits. What may not be widely recognized is that not only does the undocumented individual fear governmental processes but the whole family fears them as well. Naturalized citizens are put in a state of fear to protect love ones who are not documented. This fear affects their participation in processes such as the census to which they are entitled. This fear then leads to an undercount of the peoples in an area such as Texas. This undercount leads to less federal funds and to a general deterring of the well being of the community.

How then to help overcome this distrust and get an accurate count.. Practice has shown that there are institutions that the families of mixed legalities do trust. One of these institutions is the church of their belief. Statistically the church that represents the largest block of Hispanics is the Catholic Church, but my remarks can be general to all churches.

It is vital that faith based systems be heavily used in the outreach for the census process. This use must be active and not passive. Priests and ministers must be encouraged to actively state that the census process must be participated in. Posters and bulletin inserts must be used over and over to convince individuals that the census participation will not put them at risk.

I urge one more thing. During the last census, the government sent mixed signals. While publicly proclaiming that all people were hoped for during the census process, the immigration service was conducting widespread raids and roundups. This had the obvious effect of depressing participation. The natural fear and distrust of the government coupled with raids tells the Hispanic community that you do not really want them to register. I urge you to demand a moratorium on such raids during the census process. Only by an open and fair process, one completed without fear can the census truly have meaning.

Thank you for listening to me today.

Steve Saldana,  
President /CEO

## W. FRENCH PL.

- Administrative Offices
- Adolescent Pregnancy & Parenting Program
- Anti-Trafficking Program
- Caregiver's Day Out
- CHIP Outreach
- Foster Grandparent Program
- Great Start
- Guardianship Services
- Healthy Spirit
- Precious Minds, New Connections
- Refugee Resettlement Program
- RSVP

## W. DURANGO

- Earned Income Tax Credit Program
- Guadalupe Community Center
- Money Management Program
- San Antonio Birth Doulas
- Supporting Healthy Marriages

## W. SALINAS ST.

- Crisis Intervention Program
- Immigration Services
- Unaccompanied Minors Pro Bono Program

## LOCKHILL-SELMA RD. (STE. 101)

- Catholic Counseling & Consultation Center

## S. TRINITY ST.

- Guadalupe Home