



LIÊN ĐOÀN CÔNG GIÁO VIỆT NAM TẠI HOA KỲ
FEDERATION OF VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS IN THE USA

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STATEMENT OF FEDERATION OF VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS IN THE USA
ON THE 50 YEAR-REMEMBRANCE APRIL 30, 1975

The Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975 forced hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing Vietnam in search of freedom. President Gerald Ford settled about 130,000 of those in the United States. Within this first wave, it is estimated at least half of the refugees were Catholic. The second wave of 'boat people' arrived in the United States from after 1975 to 1980's. In the late 1980's, the third wave of immigrants from Vietnam to the US was through the Orderly Departure Program, Amerasian Homecoming Act, and the Humanitarian Operation Program. Since then, the majority of Vietnamese immigrants have arrived through family reunification programs.

Fifty years later, over 2.4 million Vietnamese now call the United States their home. Among them, there are over 700,000 Catholics. To foster the culture and pass on the faith to the next generation, many communities and parishes were established within the local churches. There are now about 300 Vietnamese Catholic Communities, of which there are 70 national/personal parishes throughout many dioceses. There are three Vietnamese American Bishops, 1,100 priests, 180 permanent deacons, 650 religious women and 250 religious men and seminarians. Many of those are lived witnesses of their faith through challenges and survival. Today the US Church has been blessed with numerous Vietnamese religious vocations, youth societies, and spiritual organizations. His Excellency Earl K. Fernandes, Bishop of the Diocese of Columbus in Ohio and also the Chairman for the Subcommittee of Asian and Pacific Islanders of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, stated in his letter to the Federation of Vietnamese Catholics in the USA: *"The presence of Vietnamese Catholic clergy and members of the lay faithful in the United States has been a great blessing to the Church."* In his address to the Vietnamese priests attending the Eighth Emmaus Convocation in Orange, California on October 19, 2019, His Emminence Christophe Cardinal Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States said: *"Vietnamese American Catholics contribute to evangelization through their personal witness and experience as a people... Vietnamese American Catholics know the experience of enduring persecution, fleeing as refugees, and suffering the loneliness that comes from being separated from family, homeland, and culture. They know well the struggles of being immigrants and of linguistic difficulties, and yet they persevere... This experience can enrich the Church in the United States, because among Vietnamese Catholics, they understand faith not merely as a set of teachings or view it as something to be taken for granted. Faith is not lived as something purely formal or abstract; it is a lived reality."*

On this solemn occasion of the 50th year remembrance of the Fall of Saigon in April 1975, with profound appreciation, we remember the many countries and people who have welcomed, embraced, and helped many Vietnamese refugees and immigrants beginning their new lives as well as offering them opportunities to contribute to the prosperity of their new countries. Especially, we are in deep gratitude to the Church in the United States and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Through Catholic Charities, they have welcomed and supported the Vietnamese refugees to resettle and freely live their faith in this great country.

In this sacred moment, we also remember those who had sacrificed their lives during the Vietnam War for us to live in freedom. We remember those who had lost their lives in escaping Vietnam in search of freedom. May the Risen Christ grant them eternal rest.

We also turn our thoughts and prayers to the country of Vietnam to find peace and prosperity and may the people live in true freedom, truth, justice, and charity. We also pray for the Church of Vietnam to flourish as courageous witness of faith to all people.

May God, through the intercession of Our Lady of La Vang, Saint Joseph, the Patron Saint of the Church of Vietnam, and the Holy Martyrs of Vietnam, bless and keep us always in His love.