News



Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, Texas, speaks at a news conference during a Nov. 14, 2023, session of the fall general assembly of the U.S. bishops in Baltimore. Also pictured are Fr. Iván Montelongo, of the Diocese of El Paso, Texas, and Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana. (OSV News photo/Bob Roller)



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After immigration agents detained a nun from his diocese, Brownsville Bishop Daniel Flores called for the reform of protocols allowing the capture of people of faith on their way to church.

"For now, it is clear that [Department of] Homeland Security enforcement protocols that make it possible for a religious sister, or anyone, to be detained and handcuffed while peacefully walking to Church on a Sunday morning are wildly disturbing and need to be reformed," he said in a statement dated June 29.

Related: ICE releases Texas nun after detaining her on the way to Sunday Mass

In it, Flores praises Sr. Leticia Ugboaja, known as "Sister Letty," a member of the Daughters of Mary Mother of Mercy. She was captured June 28 by immigration officials on her way to church at Our Lady of Sorrows parish in McAllen, Texas, where she is an extraordinary minister of holy Communion. She also is a registered nurse working at the South Texas Health System, the diocese said.

"Sister Letty is a well-known source of goodness and hope in our community, and I am grateful she has been released," Flores said.

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A June 30 video by Noticias Telemundo shows Ugboaja in a white habit, visibly shaken while walking out of a facility in Raymondville, Texas, surrounded by a chain-link fence. She holds her hand to her mouth, then puts her hand over her heart and appears to be crying. Sr. Norma Pimentel, a member of the Missionaries of Jesus, known for her migrant ministry in Texas, steps out of an SUV and hugs her.

"The Diocese of Brownsville is grateful for the rapid outpouring of support for Sister Leticia from the local community," the diocesan statement said. "We are grateful also for the quick response of local representatives who reached out to the Department of Homeland Security to get her released from custody."

This story appears in the **Immigration and the Church** feature series. View the full series.