

Local pastors plead for immigrants at hearings in Washington, D.C.

By Voice staff

Religious leaders from the East Bay and San Francisco, representing local PICO-affiliated activist organizations, were among 350 clergy from across 38 states who traveled to Washington D.C. last month to demand the stoppage of mass immigration raids in their cities.

During its May 16-17 two-day visit, the group called for congressional hearings to investigate Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) behavior and delivered a statement to the White House, the Department of Homeland Security and key Congressional leaders laying out their objections to current Homeland Security regulations regarding immigrants.

"We object to federal government action that has broken up families, left children abandoned and traumatized whole communities. We should not need to shelter young children asking, 'Where is my mother? Where is my father?'," their statement said.

The delegation also participated in a Children's Hearing on the Social Impact of Raids on Families and Communities, May 17, on Capitol Hill. Episcopal priest Anna Lange-Soto from the Peninsula Interfaith Action Group in San Mateo County related the impact of ICE raids on her congregation and Norma Mejia from Richmond told the story of being

(Continued on page 8)

THE Catholic VOICE

VOL. 45, NO. 11

DIOCESE OF OAKLAND

JUNE 4, 2007

Immigration

(Continued from page 1)

separated from her husband while seven months pregnant.

Among the East Bay statement signers were: Father Jerry Brown, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Brentwood; Father Ramiro Flores, parochial administrator of St. Mark Parish in Richmond; Father Filiberto Barrera, parochial administrator of St. Cornelius Parish in Richmond; Carolyn Krantz, pastoral

associate of St. Peter Martyr Parish in Pittsburg; and Father Hugo Hernandez, parochial administrator of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Concord. All are part of the Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization (CCISCO).

Signers from Oakland Community Organizations included Father Jesus Nieto-Ruiz, pastor of St. Anthony Parish, and Father Antonio Valdivia, retired pastor of St. Louis Bertrand Parish. Father Stephan Kappler, parochial administrator of St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Berkeley, also signed.