

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Speech at National Catholic Prayer Breakfast

Cardinal O'Malley

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley of Boston, the keynote speaker at the 10th annual National Catholic Prayer Breakfast in Washington, issued a renewed call for immigration reform. Cardinal O'Malley recalled his early years of ordained ministry as a Capuchin Franciscan priest at the Spanish Catholic Center in Washington, not far from the hotel where the breakfast was held. The work there "was an uplifting experience in my life," he recalled in remarks made May 13 at the breakfast. "Most of my parishioners were undocumented workers, refugees from the wars in Central America," he said. "We received thousands of immigrants from Latin America"

*"Pope Francis' presence at Lampedusa was a clarion call to reject the attitude of indifference to the plight of immigrants."*

during that era, he added. "They were not evil invaders but people seeking to feed and clothe their families in safety, much like the immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Germany and Poland." Cardinal O'Malley said a just solution for those immigrants would be similar to that for Jean Valjean, the protagonist of "Les Miserables": "Not to punish them but to initiate new and more just laws to replace a system that is broken and woefully inadequate." Cardinal O'Malley also spoke about persecution of the church, saying, "Today the attacks directed at the church are directed at our teaching concerning the dignity of the human person, the sacredness of life and the importance of marriage." The cardinal's keynote address follows.

It is a great joy to be with you here today at this prayer breakfast. They tell us breakfast is the most important meal. That could not be any truer than here, as we gather as believers to celebrate our faith and share a meal on this feast of Our Lady of Fatima, whose constant message is prayer and conversion.

I am happy to bring you the warmest greetings of Pope Francis. I told him about today's event. I am sure that if Pope Francis were here he would urge us to renew the missionary spirit of our church as we carry the glad tidings of the Gospel to the periphery. Sometimes the periphery can mean Harvard, Yale, Wall Street or even in this hotel where President Reagan was shot, a block from my old parish.

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