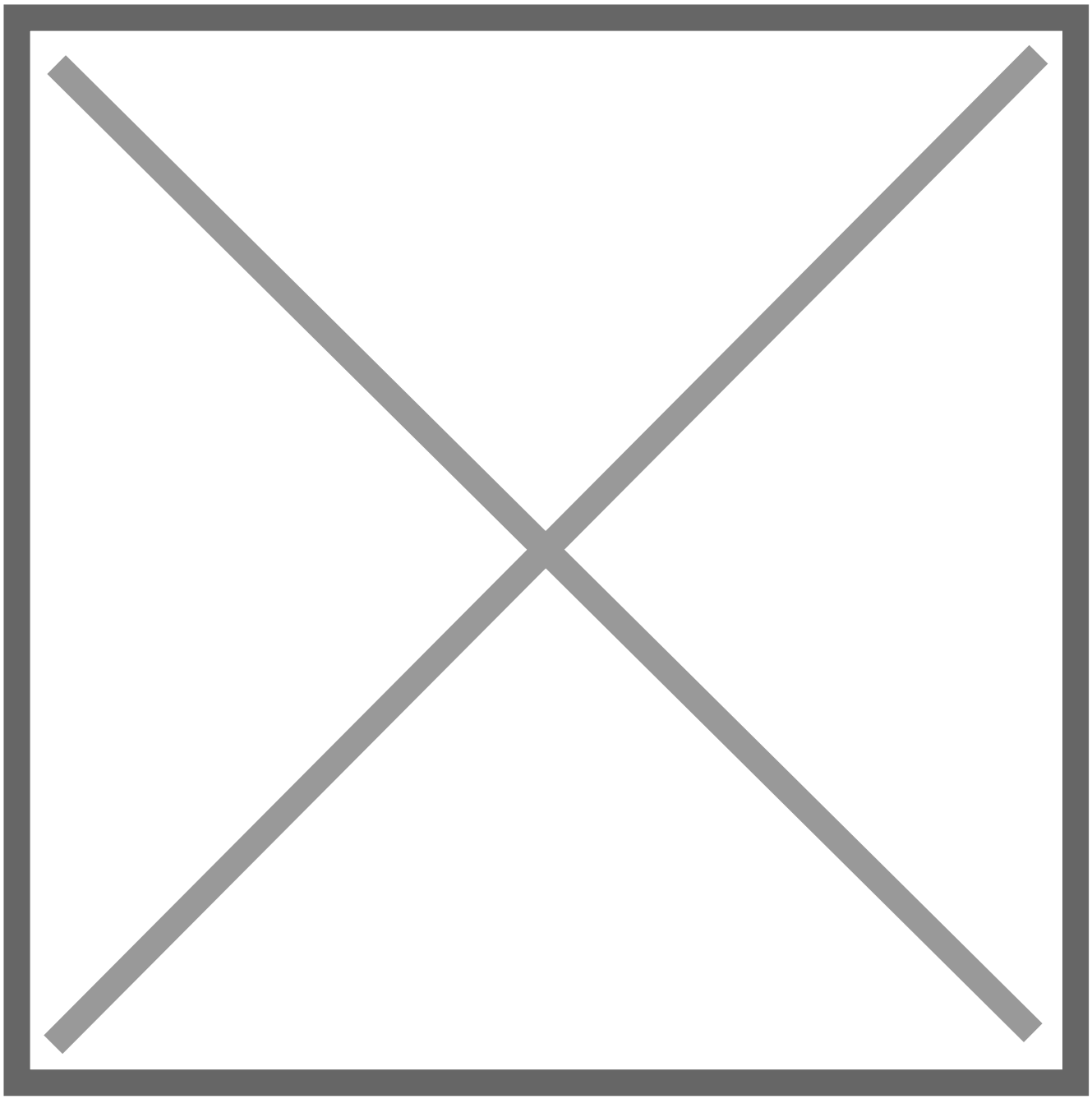
News



Denver Auxiliary Bishop Jorge Rodríguez prays the rosary July 10, 2026, outside a facility that is expected to be used as an ICE Detention Center in Hudson, Colo. He was joined by local Catholics and members of a Vatican delegation for human rights that was visiting the U.S. (OSV News/Denver Catholic/Joe Donelson)

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HUDSON, Colo. — July 21, 2026
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In Hudson, on the wide, sweeping plains of Eastern Colorado, an intimate group of Catholics, faith leaders and human rights representatives gathered to pray the rosary July 10.

Just outside the vacant Hudson Correctional Facility, roughly 30 miles northeast of Denver, the group interceded for those who will occupy the facility when it reopens as a 1,200-bed detention center for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Hosted by Denver Auxiliary Bishop Jorge Rodríguez, the gathering included a delegation from the World Meeting of Popular Movements, a global initiative co-sponsored by grassroots organizations and the Vatican's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The delegation included Fr. Mattia Ferrari of the Archdiocese of Modena-Nonantola in north-central Italy, who is coordinator of the organization; César Piscoya, a Peruvian theologian and adviser to the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopal Council, or CELAM; and Luca Casarini, the Italian founder of Mediterranea Saving Humans.

"We are here now, we are all over the world because we want to create a space between popular, community-organized movements and the Church," Casarini explained about the delegation's U.S. visit. They met with communities in Los Angeles, Seattle, Denver, Houston, Pittsburgh and elsewhere from June 20 to July 17.

Together with the international delegation, Denver Catholics prayed for a deeper respect for human dignity, especially for migrants amid the Trump administration's mass deportations and its use of large detention centers like the Hudson Correctional Facility.

"As believers, we believe in the power of prayer," Rodríguez said. "We acknowledge something sad and tragic may happen in this place, but for us this is just a symbolic way of expressing our concern, and to bring this concern to our most powerful God who will help us to do the right thing. That is why we are here."

"Yesterday we had a gathering, today we had this rosary with a simple message that those who are organizing for human dignity, justice and, as Catholics, to be the face of Christ … are not alone," added Thomas Weiler, a lead organizer with Together Colorado and a member of the Archdiocesan Committee for the Pastoral Care of Migrants.

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"Folks like Pope Leo and the broader Catholic community know that this is what it means to put our faith in action for solidarity and for human dignity," he told Denver Catholic, the online news outlet of the Denver Archdiocese.

In Hudson, each decade of the rosary was accompanied by stories of specific migrants who have called for help from the Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc., or CLINIC.

"We read stories of different migrants who have been facing detention, deportation, family separation or separation from their children as a way to center that this is a human experience that no one should face," Weiler explained. "This is not about anything other than how we can stand with our brothers and sisters on the margins, in the periphery. Those who are facing systemic injustice. The response of people of faith is love and solidarity."

For Casarini, the experience was eye-opening. From Europe, he was shocked to hear of the mass deportations. Now, having visited and prayed with Denver Catholics, he's encouraged and filled with hope.

"I think the message is that, in the United States, there are many persons that, in this moment, have solidarity with the migrants," he continued. "The Church is involved, and they show that there is another way, another part of the world that wants peace. That wants love and not hate."

As the facility prepares for reopening as an ICE detention center, local Catholics are concerned for all those involved, for those who will occupy the facility and those who will work within it.

"I'm concerned with what it's going to do to divide this community," Patrick Buckley told Denver Catholic. "My fear is that people from the same parish and the same community will end up on sort of opposite sides. Your cousin could be the guard for your uncle who got picked up. My fear is that it'll really fracture the community."

"It just comes down to: Are we treating people with dignity? I can't imagine anything more assaulting than to lose your dignity and hope. I think these centers sort of represent the loss of that — the loss of hope and the loss of dignity," added Jane Marquesen of Citizens of the World.

As the rosary was said, and stories of migrants were shared, one thing was clear: All those created by God deserve to be treated with dignity and justice.

"First, hopefully we don't need this detention center," Rodriguez said. "But if it is to happen, I hope that it will happen with respect to human dignity of everyone involved — of course the detainees, but also the people who work here. I really believe in the power of prayer to help that."

Eventually, the delegation from the World Meeting of Popular Movements will deliver their observations on social justice work in Denver and around the world to Pope Leo XIV, and the dignity of the human person will be at the forefront of their minds.

"If Jesus Christ came now, he would be in the detention center. Because he is with the poor," Casarini concluded. "The Gospel is not a novel. The Gospel is a way of life; it is a guide to our lives. It is not simply a suggestion to help us think that we are good.

"For example, the solidarity between humans and the human family is at the center of the Gospel. If we build a world with human rights at its center, we realize a new world, better for all."

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