Standing in Solidarity

Last week the federal agency, Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) came to the diocese detaining several Hispanics in the Monroe, Vernon and Trempealeau county areas. Several Catholic Charities staff members were in Sparta to stand in solidarity with the families affected by the raid. There was little we or anyone else could do to prevent the action that was taken as families were disrupted and separated as several men (and some women) were removed from homes. Many children were left with a single parent. On Sunday evening, Catholic Charities staff was present at the 6:00 pm Mass in Spanish at St. Patrick’s Church. Afterward, people were invited to the social hall where they could gather and we had a chance to meet families that had been disrupted and, because the major bread-winner had been removed, now needed assistance. I mentioned earlier in the paragraph we went to stand in solidarity with the families. That is important work and one of the components of Catholic Social Teaching. We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Being our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers may not be a universal “socially accepted” idea, but indeed it is true. Jesus’ call to love one another extends way beyond our families and friends, and we oftentimes forget that. Pope Francis writes, “I have a dogmatic certainty: God is in every person’s life. You can, you must try to seek God in every human life.”

In La Crosse, the renovation of our new downtown building that will house the Warming Center and some of our Community Outreach offices is progressing very well. Over the next few weeks major steps at installing more of the “finishing” touches will progress. We hope to be in the building by the end of October so we can be prepared to open doors on November 1. Take a look at a couple of pictures that are attached below to illustrate the progress.
As I look out my office window in the Diocesan Center I can see the blush of color starting to appear in the leaves of the trees on the nearby bluffs. Autumn is a beautiful time of the year. Try to take some time to enjoy nature’s beauty and marvel and praise the goodness of the Lord!