

Immigration Reform: Why of Interest to the Church?






- Why are the bishops and a growing number of Catholics engaged in the immigration reform debate?
- What is the Church trying to achieve?
- How will we achieve success?





Scope of Education

- What our faith compels of us.
 - Why the Church in the U.S. has special responsibilities toward immigrants.
 - The FACTS about immigration.
 - What the Church is advocating.
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You shall treat the stranger no differently than the natives born among you, have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once strangers in the land of Egypt.

(Lv19:33-34)





For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.


Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.

(Mt.25: 35, 40)





CST Principles Relating to Migration

- Right not to migrate.
 - Right to migrate.
 - Nations have right to control borders.
 - “Refugees” have a right to protection.
 - Human dignity of all must be respected.
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Laborem Exercens

(On Human Work)

Emigration in search of work should in no way become an opportunity for financial or social exploitation.

The ultimate antidote to illegal immigration is the elimination of global underdevelopment...in the meantime, the human rights of migrants, even in the cases on non-legal immigration, must be respected.

Pope John Paul II





The Immigrant Church

Catholic portion of U.S. population
nearly tripled between
mid-1800's and early-1900's.





Today's Immigration Reality



Immigration Levels

- 1990 foreign-born population = 19.8 million (8%)
- 2000 foreign-born population = 28.4 (11%)

(Foreign-born population in 1910 = 15%
of total U.S. population.)

- Undocumented population:
 - Doubled in past 10 years (11 million)

Immigrant Dispersion



- Locations of fastest growth in foreign-born populations (1990-2000):
 - North Carolina (273.3% growth)
 - Georgia (233% growth)
 - Nevada (200% growth)
 - Arkansas (196.3% growth)

Legal Visa Availability



- 450,000 service industry jobs to immigrants;
10,000 visas
- Family visas: up to 20 year backlog

Labor Force Participation by Undocumented



- 92% of men working (83% of native born)
- Undocumented workers are 5% of U.S. workforce.
- 97% work in service, construction, production, installation, and repair.
- 3% in agriculture.
- 25% of drywall installers, meat and poultry workers, ground maintenance workers, and housekeepers are undocumented.

Border Enforcement



- U.S. Border Patrol Budget:
 - 1986...\$151 million
 - 2002...\$1.6 billion(tenfold increase)
- Border Patrol largest arms-bearing branch of U.S. government, except for military.
- Cost of building fence along entire southwest border: \$9 billion.

Border Deaths



- Ten year period beginning in 1995:
 - nearly 3,000 migrant deaths
- Currently, one death per day!

Consequences of current immigration system:

- Large and growing undocumented population estimated to be about 11 million people
- Families apart for long periods
- Labor demands exceed legal supply
- Border deaths
- Public attitudes

**U.S. and Mexican Bishops Issue
Pastoral Letter on Migration**



*Strangers No Longer:
Together on the Journey of Hope*

January 2003

Bishops' prescription...

- Expanded opportunities for family reunification.
- Worker program containing protections for U.S. and migrant workers.
- Earned legalization program for the undocumented in the country.
- Targeted and humane enforcement.
- Address root causes of migration--economic, political, and social conditions.



a journey of hope

The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

Campaign's Primary Objectives:

- To educate the public, especially the Catholic community, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants;
- To create political will for positive immigration reform;
- To enact legislative and administrative reforms;
- To organize Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants obtain the benefits of the reforms.

How will Campaign accomplish objectives?

- Broad coalition of Catholic organizations at diocesan and national levels.
- Leadership of bishops and other diocesan leaders.
- Justice for Immigrants Campaign in each diocese.
- Engagement of broader advocacy coalitions.
- Educational efforts targeting parishioners and others.
- Grassroots organizing and mobilizing to influence policies and pursue legislative strategies.
- Outreach and training to develop capacity within Catholic networks to assist immigrants.



Gospel attitudes

Gospel-inspired actions



The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

www.justiceforimmigrants.org

www.justiciaparalosinmigrantes.org

The Debate



- “What don’t you understand about ‘illegal’?”
- “Immigrants, especially undocumented, are taking jobs from U.S. workers.”
- “The 11 million undocumented here have no right to be here and should be sent back.”
- “All we need to do is seal our border and the illegal entries will stop.”
- “Today’s immigrants are not like us; they’re not learning English and they don’t want to integrate into our society.”

General Messages:

- Only comprehensive approach to reforming immigration will fix ills.
- An enforcement-only approach (ala H.R. 4437) will fail; no wall high or long enough will deter desperate people.
- To avoid permanent underclass, must deal with undocumented population.
- Such an “earned” legalization is not “amnesty.”

General Messages:

- Economy depends upon foreign labor, yet inadequate legal means to fill jobs.
- Legal means for reuniting families can take 20 years; our laws should facilitate family retention.
- Policies that encourage global poverty reduction will give prospective migrants a choice to remain home.