cross the globe today—in North America and in southern Africa, in Europe and in east Asia—migration, the movement of people from one place to another, stirs intense public controversy. To hear so much alarmist talk about “out of control” migration, one might get the impression that hordes of migrants are banging on the doors of the rich countries. But in reality most people do not move; nor do they want to move. The poorest of the poor hardly move at all.

The United Nations estimated that 191 million persons migrated in 2005, a figure that represents only 3 percent of the total world population. Approximately 154 million are persons who choose to move voluntarily, including students, business professionals, oil workers and even circus people who temporarily change their countries of residence. An even smaller percentage of the global migrant population is forced migrants or refugees. People who decide to immigrate permanently constitute a very small minority of the human race.

Why do so few people migrate? Because the act of uprooting oneself has deep physical, psychological, social, economic, religious and linguistic consequences, most people, unless forced to move, prefer to stay at home. Migration is too difficult. It is also too expensive. If poverty were the cause of migration, then the poorest countries of the world would generate the most migrants. In fact, the poorest countries produce the fewest transnational migrants. Although integrated world markets, cheaper communication technology and transportation have dramatically reduced the complexity and cost of moving, migration still requires money and networks. The migrant does not have to be rich but he or she rarely comes from the very bottom of the economic ladder.

Economic factors are central to any good analysis of migration. The economic gap between rich and poor countries continues to grow and this gap surely motivates migration. A migrant, for example, can earn a dramatically higher wage in the United States than inside Mexico. But to reduce
Separation of families can often be stressful on migrant parents. These Honduran volunteers and Tom Green, S.J. (New Orleans Province) discuss ways to facilitate reunification of families where separation has been lost.

From the Office…

T

his issue of In All Things considers the Catholic Church as it relates to immigration. Although the question of immigration reform took the national stage in 2006, the Catholic Church has provided services to and advocacy on behalf of immigrants since early in U.S. history. Indeed, as Richard Ryscavage, S.J., explains, our Church continues to be an immigrant Church. But if America is a country of immigrants, and the Catholic Church a church of immigrants, what is different about the phenomenon today that it has attracted so much attention? And what does today’s immigration suggest about the future?

The current immigration wave is set in a time of profound historical change. Contrary to the history of diverse immigrants in the Church, as explained by James E. Krummert, S.J., a large portion of the current influx of immigrants are linguistically homogeneous. This factor and the phenomenon of globalization have enabled immigrant communities to become transnational communities, affecting the way they integrate into American society, as described by Elizabeth Goldsack and Erica Dahl-Bredin. Moreover, immigration has created an economic uncertainty amongst the lower-skilled classes in developed and developing countries alike, two Catholic Church debate how this economic uncertainty affects the immigration question in the U.S. Thirdly, the war on terror has created a climate of fear in the United States, making it more difficult to respond to the call of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Mexican Episcopal Conference for their flocksto be Strangers No Longer. J. Kevin Appleby’s article explains the immigration policy prescriptions in that pastoral letter.

The uncertainty surrounding this historical change has impacted the U.S. and the Church’s responses to immigration reform. Some local legislation has reacted to undocumented immigration by restricting immigrants’ ability to rent homes and secure employment; others have settled for proposals to relocate illegal immigrants to the States unless a person has an effective view of immigration pre- sented by academic research, the public perception remains that this elevated level of immigration is dangerous. Observes point to the many problems associated with immigration: trespassing on private property, gang violence, criminal smuggling, the production of counterfeited documents, packed local emergency rooms, public health and environmental issues, chaos at the Mexico–U.S. border, and English-speaking citizens who are made to feel like foreigners in their own town. All of these issues have provided an anti-immigration backlash and a temporary and overtly public debate in the United States about continued on page 4

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Published biweekly, In All Things aims to project a new paradigm for understanding the social apostolate by highlighting the connection between local and global issues, and between domestic and international justice with the context of the Jesuit Society of Jesus and the social thought of the Catholic Church.

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most of them are young people in search of work. More recent immigrants have started to bypass the traditional immigration cities of New York, Los Angeles and Miami in favor of the U.S. interior and high growth regions like Nevada and North Carolina. So the impact of immigration in no longer primarily confined to the east and west coasts.

Immigration in the United States

Although the level of immigration seems high, it is almost impossible to gain legal entry to the United States unless a person has an employer or family sponsor who is already a legal resident in the country. Even then, the wait for visas can stretch on for years. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the demand for workers in less-skilled jobs will continue to increase in the next 10 years. Fewer native-born workers will be available to fill these jobs because they are growing older and more educated. Yet only 5,000 legal visas are available for such jobs annually. The U.S. immigration system does not match the demands of the U.S. labor market. Because there are too few visas available, it is not surprising that close to 12 million people are currently in the country illegally, most of them from Mexico, Central America and China. Large numbers of these undocumented immigrants have been integrated into the labor force, paying income and payroll taxes. Professor Douglas Massey estimated that the undocumented-­‐‐ed have fed $7 billion dollars into Social Security and another $3.5 billion into Medicare. Since they cannot benefit from those entitlement programs, this money represents a net contribution to the federal revenues.

Do migrants take jobs from Americans, lower their wages and overburden social services? Most academic studies have concluded that the effect of U.S. immigration—legal, illegal, and has been beneficial to the U.S. economy. Immigrants tend to compete with other immigrants, not U.S. citizens, for jobs. Immigrants do not depress the wages of those American citizens workers who have at least a high school education. There does seem to be a stronger negative effect on the wages of unskilled high school drop-outs, but it is not clear that, in the absence of immigrants, very low grade service and agricultural jobs would be filled by these U.S. citizens, even if they were paid a higher wage. Real wages for low-skilled U.S. citizens have been falling for the past quarter century, and that drop in wages seems quite unrelated to immigration.*

Despite the generally positive view of immigration presented by academic research, the public perception remains that this elevated level of immigration is dangerous. Observers point to the many problems associated with immigration: trespassing on private property, gang violence, criminal smuggling, the production of counterfeited documents, packed local emergency rooms, public health and environmental issues, chaos at the Mexico–U.S. border, and English-speaking citizens who are made to feel like foreigners in their own town. All of these issues have provided an anti-immigration backlash and a temporary and overtly public debate in the United States about...
MIGRATION: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

Legal Status of Immigrants in 2004

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Latin America</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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The Church’s position has remained consistent for decades. To look after the common good of the United States and the world, the Church believes that immigrants should be treated with respect and dignity. The Church supports policies that allow immigrants to contribute to the economy and society while maintaining their cultural and religious identity. The Church also advocates for fair and just immigration policies that recognize the human rights of all migrants. The Church’s position is based on the belief that all humans are created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore deserve respect and dignity. The Church also recognizes the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants. The Church supports policies that recognize the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants. The Church also recognizes the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants. The Church also recognizes the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants. The Church also recognizes the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants. The Church also recognizes the importance of families and communities in the integration of immigrants.
MIGRATION: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

From Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper.

MIGRATION: A SIGN OF THE TIMES

From Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper.

Erika Dahl-Bredine

Migration: A View from the South

Migration is dramatically changing the face of communities across Mexico and Central America as well as in the United States. While some of its impacts are clearly positive, migration cannot continue to be the escape valve for countries that are unable to provide for their people at home. In much of Mexico and Central America, migration is rapidly becoming an integral part of daily life. A substantial number of households in the region have at least one family member living in the United States; many are receiving remittances from that family member to help them get by. For young people entering the job market, struggling farmers, and laid-off factory workers, migrating north is often one of the few options available.

Social Costs and Benefits

The social cost of migration on families and the communities left behind is extremely high. While many migrants leave with the intent to return home within a year or two, often that period is extended indefinitely. Young children grow up without knowing one or even both parents, the strain on the grandparents and parents left behind to care for the children is often very great. In many rural communities, agricultural production has suffered, as most of the able-bodied young people have migrated north. Economic inequality within many communities has become more pronounced, as those households benefiting from regular remittances become much more prosperous than the rest.

In some cases, the changes to traditional community structures and cultural traditions have positive and dramatic impacts on communities in many rural areas. As Catholic Social Teaching affirms, people have not only the right to migrate, but also the right not to migrate.

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Religion and spirituality sustain many migrants. Religious and spiritual beliefs and practices are a source of emotional and cognitive support, a form of social and political expression and mobilization, and a vehicle of community building and group identity. Timothy L. Smith, a historian of religion, called migration a “theologizing experience,” an event that urges individuals to find meaning in their lives. Indeed, changes in location and social milieu can unsettle our self-conception at the most fundamental level. Removed from the social roles and constraints of their places of origin, newcomers need an anchor—networks and institutions. And so they often look to religion to ground and guide them in an alienating cultural landscape.

In his book *What It Means to Be an American*, Michael Walzer reminds us that Americans first acquire political competence within their ethnic, cultural and religious associations. In their religious associations, newcomers not only negotiate differences with one another, they also inevitably encounter people of different religious backgrounds, particularly those of the host society. Places of worship have had a long history of facilitating integration of continued on page 10

Two young children enjoy a meal prepared at the Sagrado Corazón restaurant that operates out of the Jesuit border parish of the same name. Profits from the restaurant help fund services to migrants.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me... (Mt 25:35)

INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION

IN ALL THINGS

RECEIVING IMMIGRANTS: NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE CHURCH

Elżbieta M. Godzikak

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From “Latino Catholics Joining Protestant Churches” by Sonya Geis

The role of religious institutions is of particular import in new settlement areas. In the last 15 years, record numbers of immigrants have entered the United States and have settled in non-traditional geographical communities, including rural towns, suburbs, and smaller metropolitan areas. Recent immigrants, many of whom are Latino and Asian, struggle no less than their predecessors with integration and the question of how to preserve their ethnic, cultural and religious identity. Some argue that the modern phenomena of multiculturalism and transnational communities demand incentives to participate in their new communities, but many immigrants today still confront the tension between defending the old and embracing the new. In new settlement areas with little previous exposure to immigrants, immigrant integration also demands the attention of the host society, which must strike a balance between engaging newcomers and developing tolerance of differences.

The Role of the Catholic Church in Hispanic Immigration

In the late 1980s, the Catholic Church released The National Pastoral Plan for Hispanics/Minority, which emphasized cultural pluralism and integration of Latinos into the Catholic Church in a way that supported their faith traditions. An increased number of Masses in Spanish followed. The Church also encouraged the spread of apostolic movements featuring small-group worship and music to create Latino communities within larger parishes. These efforts paid off in many gateway cities with large number of Latino immigrants; however, they were not necessarily shared or understood in archdioceses that had no recent history of Latino immigration. Alejandro Aguilera-Titus of the Secretariat of Hispanic Affairs at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops sponsors the first Latino Immigration Ministry, which is both a religious and a social experience. Some argue that the modern phenomena of multiculturalism and transnational communities demand incentives to participate in their new communities, but many immigrants today still confront the tension between defending the old and embracing the new. In new settlement areas with little previous exposure to immigrants, immigrant integration also demands the attention of the host society, which must strike a balance between engaging newcomers and developing tolerance of differences.

Percent Growth of U.S. Immigrant Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Next?

The rapid increase of immigrants from Latin America to the United States has the potential to infuse new spirit and new energy into the Church. As Catholics, we must be ready to embrace this opportunity to integrate newcomers into the Catholic Church. Given her own experience as an immigrant Church in the United States, the Catholic Church and we, its members, should feel compelled to raise our voices on behalf of immigrants, to welcome them into our spiritual and physical home and to fight the prevailing hostility towards immigrants.

Notes
5. The McCarren-Harrington Act of 1952 was intended to provide legal immigration status to nonwhite aliens who had entered the United States as illegal immigrants before 1924.

INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION

INTEGRATION AND ASSIMILATION
To Be American, To Be an American Catholic

REV. JAMES GRUMMER, S.J.

Concerns about U.S. immigration policy as well as what it means to be a citizen of the United States seem to rise and fall with the percentage of the population born outside the country. Because significant portions of the foreign-born populations of the U.S. have often been largely from Catholics regions of the world, the Church in the United States has had a unique voice and perspective in immigration policy and what it means to be an American.

Before the late 1840s, the two topics were hardly mentioned at all, but global political and economic conditions in the decade between 1846 and 1855 released a flood of immigrants. As conservative governments throughout Europe (especially in German-speaking areas) exiled political and religious dissenters, especially those of Catholic origin, immigration was strong and virulent throughout the 1850s. When church burnings spread along the Eastern seaboard, Archbishop John Hughes of New York famously remarked that the day a single parish in his city experienced the arson recently perpetrated in Philadelphia, the most important step in uniting the American Catholics would look like Moscow on the day Napoleon retreated.

The Catholic Schools and the Immigrant Community

REV. EDWARD F. BOYLE, S.J.

In all things what it means to be an American Catholic

High schools from Regis in Manhattan to Creighton in Omaha to St. Ignatius in San Francisco were established so that immigrants and the sons of immigrants could receive a quality education within a safely Catholic atmosphere. St. Ignatius in Cleveland was only one of a string of high schools stretch ing from Buffalo, New York to Minneapolis, Minnesota founded by German Jesuits who had been ministered to by their homeland. During Bismarck’s Kulturkampf against the Church. At Jesuit high schools, students from diverse ethnic neighborhoods were assimilated into a unique form of Catholicism that was heavily influenced by the devotional revolution of the 19th century, particularly reverence for a papacy threatened by liberal European governments. In the process, the rich ethnic traditions of immigrant Catholics were downplayed; the emphasis was now on being American Catholics who were and more comfortable in their more and more prosperous surroundings.

This process of assimilation was further promoted as Jesuit high schools developed college divisions, which eventually became universities. The GI Bill after World War II enabled many returning veterans to be the first of their families to attend college. By the time of John F. Kennedy’s election to the presidency and the convening of the Second Vatican Council, Catholics were on their way to becoming the largest and wealthiest Christian group in the United States. Catholic institutions of all sorts, but especially Jesuit schools, were more and more comfortable in the transformation possible. At the same time, memories of the fascist attacks that had led to the formation of a justifiable defensive American Catholic culture had faded along with memories of the immigrant experience itself.

The “New Immigration”

In the past generation, the so-called New Immigration has further changed the face of the United States and the Catholic Church. In the 30 years since the 1970 consensus, the percentage of foreign-born residents rose from 4.7 percent (the lowest since 1920) to 14.8 percent in 1990. Mexicans, Salvadorans, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, and Vietnamese are only some of those who have participated in the double process of becoming Americans and becoming American Catholics. As has happened before, immigration reform and discussions of what it means to be an American remain.

In that context, it might be helpful for us to review the relevant entries of the Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups so that we might more easily recognize the path to follow.

Although the New Immigrants may not have confronted the same history of opposition experienced by Archbishop Hughes’s flock, neither do they escape the prohibitions and persecutions. As an all-encompassing attack the Church and the Society of Jesus devoted to immigrants a century earlier. The need to nurture the faith of both foreign-born and native-born Americans is complex, challenging, and ever changing. More and more than ever it is important to remember the contemporary relevance first laborers from the land “you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt.”

Notes


Practicing Catholic Social Teaching Is Also Smart Business

Laurence A. Olavarri

“Work is the essential expression of the person, for a person is called by God to fulfill that task in order to be a true human being.”

—Compendium on Catholic Social Teaching, n. 269.

Immigrants come to the United States looking for opportunities to work. They do so because the United States is blessed with a unique combination of policies, laws, culture and privileges that facilitate enormous opportunities for economic development and personal wealth creation.

Conversely, many countries, particularly those south of the U.S. border, do not have the economic infrastructure, policies or the government to facilitate or sustain the creation of jobs, to provide opportunities for fair wages, or to treat the person as a recipient of the goods of work. These countries have given rise to economic conditions requiring citizens to search for a better way of life. Businessmen and policy makers alike must do their best to consider what Pope John Paul II deemed “…the dramatic situation of the modern world, under the aspect of the failed development of the Third World, and …, the meaning of, and requirements for a development worthy of men.”

With respect to immigration, businesses have a responsibility to turn “immigrants into a resource for development rather than an obstacle to it.”

The Dignity of Work

The concept of “the dignity of work” carries important responsibilities upon businesses. As a businessman, I have several responsibilities: to operate my business ethically, effectively and profitably, among other goals. As a businessman, I have a greater obligation to my fellow low-income Americans than I do the poor in other countries who want to come here. This does not mean that we have no obligation to people in other countries nor does it mean that we have no obligation to undocumented immigrants. But any discussion that focuses only on the undocumented immigrants and their moral worth, with virtually no regard to the impact on poor Americans, cannot produce a moral policy.

Undocumented immigrants don’t just harm the low-income natives through job competition. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants with little education strains social services. Undocumented immigrants account for an estimated one-third to one-half of the public costs of treating the uninsured, often leaving the costs of treating the uninsured and the costs of health care and education at the state level have remained in question. The study of the economic impact of migration on the economy of the new immigrant state of North Carolina is therefore instructive.

Mrs. Alvarado is a child of immigrant parents, a former Caseworker and Border Patrol Agent, and currently Managing Director of Reimagine, Inc., management and technology consultants.

What the Catholic Church Is Missing: Care for the Poor at Home First

Steven A. Camarota

I
n thinking about illegal immigration, the leadership of the Catholic Church has focused on one thing—the illegal aliens themselves. To be sure, they are our fellow human beings made in the image of God and they are entitled to be treated as such, regardless of the fact between 2000 and 2005; at the same time, the number of adult immigrants (legal and illegal) with the same level of education grew by 1.6 million. Of perhaps greatest concern, the percentage of adult natives without a high school degree who are in the labor force fell from 59 to 56 percent between 2000 and 2005; for natives with only a high school degree, that number fell from 28 to 78 percent. Wages for low-educated native-born workers have stagnated or declined in recent years, as has the share of benefits offered, such as health care, by their employers. It’s just basic economics: increase the supply of something, in this case low-educated workers, and you reduce its price. And the price of labor is wages and benefits.

The Church, unfortunately, has become an ally of the Chamber of Commerce and others in the business community in their efforts to flood the bottom of the labor market and keep wages and benefits down. Such a position rejects the idea of concentric circles of obligation—I have greater obligation to my own children than I do to your family, I have a greater obligation to my community than I do those outside of the community; and I have greater obligation to my fellow low-income Americans than I do the poor in other countries who want to come here. This does not mean that we have no obligation to people in other countries nor does it mean that we have no obligation to undocumented immigrants. But any discussion that focuses only on the undocumented immigrants and their moral worth, with virtually no regard to the impact on poor Americans, cannot produce a moral policy.

Undocumented immigrants don’t just harm the low-income natives through job competition. The arrival of large numbers of immigrants with little education strains social services. Undocumented immigrants account for an estimated one-third to one-half of the public costs of treating the uninsured, often leaving the costs of treating the uninsured and the costs of health care and education at the state level have remained in question. The study of the economic impact of migration on the economy of the new immigrant state of North Carolina is therefore instructive.

The Dignity of Work

The concept of “the dignity of work” carries important responsibilities upon businesses. As a businessman, I have several responsibilities: to operate my business ethically, effectively and profitably, among other goals. As a businessman, I have a greater obligation to my fellow low-income Americans than I do the poor in other countries who want to come here. This does not mean that we have no obligation to people in other countries nor does it mean that we have no obligation to undocumented immigrants. But any discussion that focuses only on the undocumented immigrants and their moral worth, with virtually no regard to the impact on poor Americans, cannot produce a moral policy.

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“Our common faith in Jesus Christ moves us to search for ways that favor a spirit of solidarity. It is a faith that transcends borders and bids us to overcome all forms of discrimination and violence so that we may build relationships that are just and loving.”

Rev. Rafael García, S.J.

Immigrants often bring a rich cultural heritage with them. Danza Sagrado Corazon celebrates the Feast of the Sacred Heart, with an annual procession through their border neighborhood in El Paso, Texas.

Immigrants are not the only problem low-income Americans face in the job market. Persons with little education mostly work at jobs that don’t provide health care. And their low incomes mean they can’t afford to buy health care on their own. Because of the limited value of their labor in the modern American economy, persons with little education mostly work at jobs that don’t provide health care. And their low incomes mean they can’t afford to buy health care on their own.

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Businesses have a “precious role to play on the way economic realities are seen.” Our country’s economic system isn’t a zero-sum game of prosperity, but an environment of sustainable growth. Enterprises must adapt to many dynamics to survive and thrive, and as businesses bear the bulk of the responsibility to grow the economy and create jobs, we are implored to “concretely make solidarity an integral part of the networks of economic, political, and social interdependence that the current process of globalization tends to consolide.” Immigration policy is an important opportunity to integrate solidarity into our political and social interdependence.

American Immigration Policy and Labor

Tamar Jacoby explains well the complexity of the concern about immigration depressing American wages. “Opponents of immigration ask why employers do not simply pay American workers more and avoid the need for foreign labor. But many industries cannot pay more, because they would be undercut by imports from abroad. Even in sectors such as construction and hospitality, in which the work must be done in the United States, it hardly makes sense to lure an American to a less productive job than he or she is capable of by paying more for less-skilled work. Meanwhile, because they complement rather than compete with most native-born workers (and thus in turn attracts additional capital), immigrants raise rather than lower most Americans’ wages.”

This argument expresses the importance of immigrant labor, despite the fact that the increased competition from abroad can impact individual laborers. The U.S. government has the capacity to regulate the degree to which American workers compete with laborers abroad, but in the case of U.S. immigration policies lag behind the corporate reality.

U.S. policies tend to facilitate immigration of highly-skilled workers, but the number of visas issued to low-skilled workers lags behind economic need. The Love of Christ Towards Migrants, Instruction of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, 2004

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Available employment is a powerful magnet drawing immigrants into this country. Since we use their labor and do not penalize those employers who hire them, are we not complicit in this lawbreaking? To compound matters, U.S. immigration law fails to provide legal channels for these workers to migrate safely and legally. With as many as 500,000 undocumented persons entering the country each year, the number of work visas available to low-skilled workers is absurdly small compared to demand—a 5,000 per year in the permanent system and fewer than 100,000 per year in the temporary one. Family unity visas are even more scarce, with waiting times as long as 10 years for immediate family members from Mexico to be reunified. Given these realities, it is important that the U.S. immigration system be changed to reflect the contributions of immigrant workers and to protect their rights. By providing them legal status and a path to citizenship, undocumented workers would be better able to assert their rights in the workplace and fully contribute to their communities without fear. Over the long-term, our elected officials must examine the root causes of migration and work with the sending countries to create jobs for migrants in their home communities. This represents the ultimate solution to our immigration crisis, one that the erection of a 700-mile border fence cannot provide.

Mr. Appleby is Director of Policy for Migration and Refugee Services at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.
Building with the Four Cornerstones of Accompanying Migrants
A Theological Reflection on Migration

Rev. KEVIN O’BREIN, S.J.

In recent decades, with a growing sense of urgency, the Catholic Church has brought its 21st-century-old tradition of social teaching to bear on the plight of refugees, internally displaced persons, and migrants. Practicing its teachings, the Church has served and advocated for those people forced from their home by war, conflict, political persecution, or economic necessity. In the last decade, U.S. bishops have responded with a series of statements and campaigns to address the crisis of forced migration in the Americas. Their response has been very practical, proposing detailed action plans for individuals, parishes, business leaders, and legislators. These practical initiatives are grounded in both prayer and principle: The bishops insist that effective action on behalf of migrants must be preceded by a conversion of mind and heart that helps us see the face of Christ in the migrant. This conversion confronts head-on deeply ingrained attitudes of cultural superiority, patterns of discrimination, and ungrounded yet persistent fears of strangers.

As for principle, I discern in the documents four cornerstones that support a sturdy edifice of theological argument. Together, they persuasively make the case for “Justice for Immigrants,” as the bishops’ most recent campaign is called. These cornerstones—human dignity, the common good, hospitality and solidarity—demonstrate how theology is ultimately pastoral, serving concrete human needs.

The Four Cornerstones

The fundamental dignity of each person is an underlying principle that connects the Church’s call to conversion and action. This dignity is grounded in God’s creating humanity in the divine image and in God’s choosing to become human in Jesus Christ. From this principle flows an array of moral imperatives, such as the right of persons to migrate for jobs, to earn a living wage in their home country, and to be treated fairly when detained by immigration authorities.

Hospitality: Welcoming the Stranger

The 14th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus inquired the virtue of hospitality in the context of mission in the world today, “making the Society a symbol of the Church’s ‘welcome’ to the poor and marginalized (De cree 1, 11). Today, many ecclesial communities are engaged in the ancient biblical virtue: The Old Testament is a chronicle of God’s hospitality to humanity and a summons to imitate this divine hospitality for others. Israel and the early church held up Abraham as a model of hospitality. Having experienced what it is like to be a sojourner from his homeland, Abraham feeds and sheltered three strangers—those who are revealed to be divine messengers (Gen 18:1-15). The author of the letter to the Hebrews implicitly reminds Christian communities of Abraham’s example. “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it” (Heb 13:2).

In the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Francis has invited the faithful “to realize that the life of the Church is not only the official life of the ordained, but the pastoral life of the whole People of God.” The bishops have underlined our responsibility to care for the common good. As individuals, communities, and nations, we have a duty to create conditions that will allow all people to live meaningfully, virtuous human lives, regardless of their countries of origin. The principle of the common good recognizes the right of a sovereign nation to protect its borders but insists that it is balanced against the right of migrants to cross borders to support and protect themselves. Hospitality and solidarity are as much virtues as they are principles for action. While traditional ethical systems focus on articulating universal principles and applying them to concrete cases, virtue ethics is primarily concerned with the person and how character is shaped. It asserts certain virtues—that is, attitudes, dispositions, character traits, and habits—that help us to flourish as persons and live fulfilling lives. Hospitality and solidarity, like any virtues, are cultivated by practicing them.

Strangers No Longer
Joint Pastoral Letter of U.S. and Mexican Bishops

In a parable about the final judgment, Jesus declares that failing to welcome the stranger is an offense against God (Mt 25:31-46). Jesus calls his disciples to be like the Good Samaritan who recognizes the suffering of the stranger and acts out of compassion to help him (Lk 10:25-37). Accordingly, early Christians were expected to be hospitable to refugees and displaced persons. The bishops’ most recent campaign called for “accompaniment and solidarity” among Catholics on behalf of those people: “accompaniment means not just doing something for migrants but being with them in their joys and sorrows, grief and anguish.” (Joint Pastoral Letter of the U.S. and Mexican Bishops, no. 38).

The virtue of hospitality is thus a disposition to serve the spiritual and material needs of others. As such, only solidarity can “conquer” the opposing virtue, which John Paul describes as the all-consuming thirst for riches and power that devours and oppresses others (no. 38). Like the virtue of hospitality, solidarity is meant to be learned through practice, but “book knowledge” is not enough. In a speech at Santa Clara University in 2000, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., general superior of the Society of Jesus, asserted that solidarity must be “learned through ‘contact’ rather than through ‘concept.’” When our heart is engaged by personal involvement in uncomfortable circumstances, we are impelled to act in a reflective, effective way.

As we practice hospitality and solidarity on behalf of migrants, we look to the Jesuit Refugee Service for inspiration. JRS describes its way of proceeding as “accompaniment,” which means sharing the lives of displaced persons and building relationships steeped in mutuality. Accompaniment means not just doing something for migrants but being with them in their joys and sorrows, grief and anguish. JRS personnel work, live, pray, and play alongside refugees. Hospitality and solidarity become a way of life and an expression of solidarity that deals directly with the all-consuming thirst for riches and power that devalues and oppresses others (no. 38). Like the virtue of hospitality, solidarity is meant to be learned through practice, but “book knowledge” is not enough. In a speech at Santa Clara University in 2000, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., general superior of the Society of Jesus, asserted that solidarity must be “learned through ‘contact’ rather than through ‘concept.’” When our heart is engaged by personal involvement in uncomfortable circumstances, we are impelled to act in a reflective, effective way.

Solidarity means taking responsibility for those in trouble. The Church must, therefore, welcome all persons regardless of race, culture, language, and nation with joy, charity, and hope. It must do so with special care for those who find themselves—regardless of motive—in situations of poverty, marginalization, and exclusion.


Rev. John A. Breideger, S.J.
Pastor of Sacred Heart
St. Dominic Parish, Portland, ME

FAITH REFLECTIONS ON MIGRATION

Rev. Dr. William Ryan, S.J.
Assistant Pastor at Holy Trinity Church, Washington, DC.

“I am blessed to be able to assist the African refugees and Hispanic immigrants. I can witness to their brokenness and their healing once they are established here in Portland. I have heard their stories and seen their wounded bodies. I have rejoiced with them when their families have been reunited after a period of great anxiety and separation. I see their experiences as the Agony in the Garden, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the Church. The African and Hispanics have gone through it all and yet have remained faithful to Christ Jesus.”

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This article reflects on how the Society of Jesus might respond to immigration in light of the Jesuit document, “A Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ.” V.90-2, p. 126. The Meditation was written by the Provincial of the United States as a guide for the strategic discernment process currently underway among the U.S. Jesuit provinces.

Plastic Pitchers and Friends of the Lord

V. REV. ROBERT SCULLIN, S.J.

This article reflects on how the Society of Jesus might respond to immigration in light of the Jesuit document, “A Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ.” V.90-2, p. 126. The Meditation was written by the Provincial of the United States as a guide for the strategic discernment process currently underway among the U.S. Jesuit provinces.

**“I believe I have done so little for this person knowing she has to face an unfair world by herself, but her words touch me: ‘You speak and make us find our own answers. You see us as persons which in return makes us respect ourselves.’”**

Imelda Bermyes, Jesuit Refugee Services Chaplain, San Pedro Detention Center, CA.

**Fr. Scullin (Detroit Province) is the Provincial of the Detroit Province.**

**Early in the development of A Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ, those working on the document provincials and staff alike, felt their imaginations moved by the awareness of waves of “forced migrants” here in North America and around the world. The Contemplation on the Incarnation placed us alongside people for whom an empty plastic container is a treasure; and shelter from weather and weapons almost bliss.**

When immigration—especially immigrants who have entered the country illegally—becomes the topic of conversation today, a tone of hostility sometimes colors it. A nation founded and built by immigrants from many countries, we often rent the recent immigrant who enters illegally. Even in the cases of legal resettlements of immigrants, particularly recent arrivals from Africa, a spirit of fear and suspicion often grips some of the most open-minded and generous souls. A nation of immigrants has ironically exhibited a xenophobic streak from its earliest years.

Perhaps what underlies this fear and suspicion is what David B. Coetzee, DRM. Cap., calls “a rhetoric of scarcity.” He explains that “Our American culture wants us and needs us to believe in scarcity. There is not enough; there is never enough time, money, care, support, love, goodness, creativity and ingenuity to support this world. We have to do more, produce more, spend more, consume more to stay off the dangers of a limited universe. We must compete against one another.”

According to the “rhetoric of scarcity,” we must protect our limited resources from illegal intruders—those undocumented immigrants, entering our country in large numbers—because they use up our limited resources. This concern overlooks completely the contribution immigrants make to the U.S. economy, powerfully and concretely depicted on film in A Day Without a Mexican (Sergio Arao, 2004). This spirit of fear and suspicion may be an example of what St. Ignatius calls a tactic of “the enemy of our human nature.”

"Perhaps the most pressing and painful examples [of those related to the very margins of society] are forced migrants (refugees, migrant workers, the undocumented)... Solidarity with them is not a matter of politics. It is part of our solidarity with Christ and the expression of our love for God.” (Meditation, n. 26 & 27)

The spirit moving in A Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ reflects an ethic of abundance that is powerfully depicted in the New Testament and in the Spiritual Exercises; this ethic of abundance calls us to a constant awareness of God’s abundant love for us. Jesuits in the U.S. experience this abundance in a particularly wonderful way in the great numbers of friends and colleagues who share the mission. This spirit of God’s abundant love calls us all to a solidarity that is broad and deep, a solidarity with the least and with all. To the extent that we tap into that spirit of abundance, we will hear the biblical mandates and be moved to care for the stranger in our midst, even those our society would deem unworthy or ‘illegal.’”

The Meditation reminds us that effective and effective solidarity with the least and with all will cost us “This commitment (to care for the immigrant and to challenge the spirit of fear) may be offensive to some, but as Jesuits, we make choices that flow from our commitment to choose poverty, dishonor, and humble service of the least among us, even if it must be in the face of a culture promoting self-indulgent economics, political domination, and lifestyle enslavement” (Meditation, n. 28).

"May the Virgin Mother, who together with her Blessed Son knew the pain of emigration and exile, help us to understand the experience, and very often the drama of those who are compelled to live far from their homeland, and teach us to serve them in their necessities, truly accepting them as brothers and sisters, so that today’s migrations may be considered a call, albeit a mysterious one, to the kingdom of God, which is already present in His Church, its beginning, and an instrument of Providence to further the unity of the human family and peace.”

The Love of Christ Towards Migrants, Instruction of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, 2004

**The need for solidarity with ‘the least’ and with ‘all’ is intensified by the emergence of global interdependency; it must be embodied in habits of life and social institutions for more lasting than ephemeral headlines and immediate response to crises” (Meditation, n. 30).**

We are called to care for the immigrant in need and, too, for those among us who are conflicted in our attitudes and positions about the care of migrants, immigration reform, and the larger global issue of millions of refugee families forced by war, terror, and economic need to leave their homes and homelands. The Meditation leads us to challenge stereotypes by seeking a nuanced understanding of current immigration patterns, the resulting consequences for our society, and a Gospel response to the plight of these families.

Early in our Jesuit history, Jerome Nadal expressed a Jesuit ethos for attending to those in greatest need when he wrote: “The Society cares for those persons who are totally neglected or inadequately attended to. This is the basic reason why the Society was founded, this is its power, this is what makes it distinctive in the Church.” Whatever our specific mission, from our earliest days we have found ways to attend to the Poor Christ of the Gospels and the Exerceris in Christ Poor today—in poultry factories, in sweatshops, and in war-torn regions around the world. For our own salvation, we must find ways to show a very practical love to immigrants in our cities and around the world. Just as the Jesuit Refugee Service came into existence through the imagination and action of Pedro Arrupe some 25 years ago, new imaginations will lead us to a range of actions today. A simple internet search brings up local and global networks and efforts that welcome our involvement, each of us. And when the U.S. Congress again takes up immigration reform, we will have important opportunities to act.

A Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ suggests for me an active colleague with the Lord as I meet him today in this critical moment of our nation’s treatment of migrants and immigrants. I started with precious plastic pitchers and end remembering some of “the most chosen friends of the Lord, the poor.” An Ignatian meditation always ends with a colloquy where with great reverence we addres the Lord and listen to His invitation. I hear that invitation in the words of a song I wrote some time ago:

Oh my people, think on those before you.
Who feed the famines and the killing camps.
These are no less children, fathers, mothers,
Seeking here a life, another chance.
Till their journey ends, and refugees can rest, Help them on their way, call them by this name:
Not aliens but friends.

**Notes**

1. The Meditation On Our Response to the Call of Christ was published by the U.S. Jesuit Provincials on July 3, 2006, the Feast of St. Ignatius, and is available online at www.jesuit.org/meditation
Reflection Questions

- How has your faith influenced your views on immigration?
- From the perspective of Catholic social teaching, what is the United States’ obligation to foreigners entering or seeking to enter the United States? And what is our obligation to foreigners in the United States?
- Discuss the possible impacts of immigration—economic, social, and cultural—on immigrant sending countries.
- How are today’s immigrants similar to Jesus’ itinerant lifestyle? How are they different? Do you see the face of Jesus in your immigrant neighbors?
- Discuss the challenge of balancing between respecting the differences of immigrants’ home cultures and asking immigrants to integrate into the host culture.
- Considering their history and future, how can and should the Church and the Society of Jesus welcome “strangers in our midst”? How can we respect and protect their dignity?

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- **From the Office**
  Jill Marie Gerschutz
  Globalization, linguistic homogeneity, and war on terror provide new challenges to immigration

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ONLINE SUPPLEMENT

The Rights of Passage: The Ethics of Migration Policy
Rebuilding New Orleans on the Backs of Immigrants
Tips for Pastoral Care of Migrants

Books

Beyond the Gateway: Immigrants in a Changing America—Elzbieta M. Godziak and Susan F. Martin, eds. Analyzes case studies on integration in new immigrant communities across the U.S.


Web Sites

Justice for Immigrants Campaign
www.justiceforimmigrants.org
Provides background information, pastoral teaching, and advocacy opportunities from the U.S. Catholic Bishops.

National Immigration Forum
www.immigrationforum.org
National advocacy agency on immigrants’ rights analyzes U.S. migration policy.

Migration Policy Institute
www.migrationpolicy.org
A non-partisan think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of peoples worldwide.

U.N. High Level Dialogue on Migration
http://www.un.int/iom/HLD2.html
Information on the U.N. forum regarding human rights, development and migration.

Jesuit University Migration Network
http://jesuimigration.fairfield.edu/
New website will soon become a source for academic research on migration from Jesuit institutions.