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Pastor's Column

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Immigration and Undocumented Immigrants

We have a broken immigration policy in this country, and it has been broken for years. Unfortunately, both political parties have, as they do with so many issues, simply played political football with immigration.

Not concerned about finding compromise for the well-being of our country, they have responded to the issue only in ways that they hope will advance their own standing, not only in the present but in future elections.

Time passes and nothing is accomplished!

Recently President Obama issued a Presidential Order or Directive that will affect millions of undocumented immigrants in this country. Hopefully, this directive will “stir the pot,” that it will be an incentive for all the political parties to sit down together and pass compromise legislation that will begin to mend a broken system.

Enclosed in today's Bulletin you will find the comments of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) regarding the actions taken by President Obama.

This recent focus on immigration has given me some pause for thought, and I wanted to share some of my personal views.

First of all, I want to say that I am in agreement with the recent comments of Jeb Bush, former Governor of Florida, as he addressed the issue: “There are means by which we can control our border better than we have. And there should be penalties for breaking the law...the way I look at this is someone who comes to our country because they couldn't come legally, they come to our country because their families—the dad who loved their children—was worried that their children didn't have food on the table. And they wanted to make sure their family was intact, and they crossed the border because they had no other means to work to be able to provide for their family. Yes, they broke the law, but it's not a felony. It's an act of love. It's an act of commitment to your family. I honestly think that that is a different kind of crime. That there should be a price paid, but it shouldn't rile people up that people are actually coming to this country to provide for their families.”

Oftentimes when talking to people about undocumented immigrants, people will say, “Well, the Polish, or the Irish, or the Italians, they followed the laws. They didn't break the law.”

In those comments, there seems, to me, to be an inherent prejudice against Hispanic people, specifically Mexicans and Central Americans. As if there is something in their character or personality or in their “genes” that makes it easier for them to break the law than for other ethnic groups.

Well, it is very difficult to come into this country illegally if you have to cross an ocean, and come through some very specific ports. It is much easier to cross a porous 2,000 mile border that is relatively close by.

If Mexico was instead called Poland, or Ireland, or Italy, we would not be dealing with the “Mexican Problem.” We would be dealing with the “Polish Problem” or the “Irish Problem” or the “Italian Problem.”

The inherent “problem” is human. No matter the race or ethnic group, if people are hungry and trying to make a better life, they will find ways to do so. Borders do not mean much to people who are suffering, hurting, and hungry.

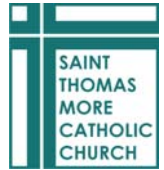
Although not in the same numbers, there are many undocumented Polish, Irish, Italian, and Canadian people and others. They come into this country on visas, and then just stay after the visas have expired. We do not hear much about them...

Undocumented immigration is a very complex problem, but we do have the where-with-all as a nation to address this situation and find just solutions. We can if we choose to do so!

F. Mike



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS



USCCB MIGRATION CHAIRMAN WELCOMES OBAMA ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCEMENT OF RELIEF FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES, USCCB PRESIDENT CITES URGENT PASTORAL NEED FOR A MORE HUMANE VIEW OF IMMIGRANTS

November 20, 2014

**Action keeps families together and protects children
Migrants are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved
Congress and President must work together for permanent reforms**

WASHINGTON—Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, M.Sp.S., auxiliary bishop of Seattle and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Migration, welcomed the news today that the Obama administration will defer deportations for many undocumented immigrants and their families.

“We have a long history of welcoming and aiding the poor, the outcast, the immigrant, and the disadvantaged. Each day, the Catholic Church in the United States, in her social service agencies, hospitals, schools, and parishes, witnesses the human consequences of the separation of families, when parents are deported from their children or spouses from each other. We’ve been on record asking the Administration to do everything within its legitimate authority to bring relief and justice to our immigrant brothers and sisters. As pastors, we welcome any efforts within these limits that protect individuals and protect and reunite families and vulnerable children,” said Bishop Elizondo.

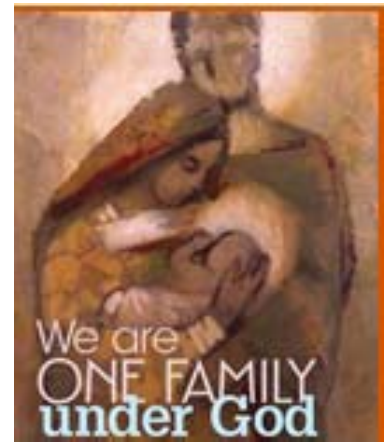
Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, archbishop of Louisville, Kentucky, and president of the USCCB said, “There is an urgent pastoral need for a more humane view of immigrants and a legal process that respects each person’s dignity, protects human rights, and upholds the rule of law. As our Holy Father, Pope Francis, said so eloquently: ‘Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected, and loved.’”

Bishop Elizondo added, “I strongly urge Congress and the President to work together to enact permanent reforms to the nation’s immigration system for the best interests of the nation and the migrants who seek refuge here. We will continue to work with both parties to enact legislation that welcomes and protects immigrants and promotes a just and fair immigration policy.”

Keywords: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, immigration reform, Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz, Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, USCCB, President Barack Obama

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IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM THE DIOCESE OF SAN DIEGO AND SDOP (SAN DIEGO ORGANIZING PROJECT)



On November 20, the President announced a new program that will benefit over 4 million undocumented people nationwide and approximately 150,000 in San Diego and Imperial Counties. Catholic Charities, in partnership with the San Diego Organizing Project (SDOP), has worked for many years to enhance the life of immigrant families in our communities. On that day, we won a big victory!

The two biggest changes are providing protection from deportation and a work permit for undocumented parents with a son or daughter who is a US Citizen or Legal Permanent Resident and the expansion of who is eligible for the same benefits under 'the program known as "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA).

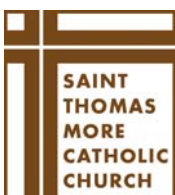
People will not be able to apply for several months., so it is very important that you do NOT give money to anyone who says he or she can help you now. In the coming weeks, Catholic Charities and SOOP will be holding free information sessions to help you understand this new opportunity, and next year when the government is prepared to accept applications, we will be available to help those eligible to apply for this program with competent, low-cost services.



El 20 de noviembre, el Presidente anunció un nuevo programa que beneficiara a mas de 4 millones de personas indocumentadas en todo el pais y aproximadamente 150.000 en los contados de San Diego e Irnpieral. Caridades Católicas, en colaboración con el Proyecto Organizando de San Diego (SDOP), han trabajado durante muchos años para rnejorar la vida de las familias inmigrantes en nuestras comunidades. En este dia, hemos ganado una gran victoria!

Los dos cambios rnás importantes incluyen la protección contra la deportación y un permiso de trabajo para los padres indocumentados con un hijo o una hija que es un ciudadano de los EEUU o residente legal permanente y la expansión de quién es elegible para los mismos beneficios bajo el programa conocido como "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals" (DACA).

La gente no podrá aplicar durante varios meses, por lo que es muy importante que usted no dé dinero a ninguna persona que dice que él o ella puede ayudarle ahora. En las próximas semanas, Caridades Católicas y SDOP proveerán sesiones de información gratuitas para ayudarle a entender esta nueva oportunidad, y el próximo año cuando el gobierno inicie aceptar solicitudes, estaremos a su disposición para ayudar a las personas con derecho a solicitar este programa con servicios competentes y de bajo costo.



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