

## Faithful Citizenship

### Principles and Strategies to Serve the Common Good

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## Immigration

### A Faithful Approach to Matters of Citizenship

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#### Introduction

[1] For undocumented immigrants living and working “in the shadows” in the United States, life is marked by harrowing border crossings, isolation in a new world, exploitation in the workplace, fear of deportation, and, increasingly, a climate of mistrust and contempt. Immigrants frequently leave home to escape the insecurity of life, only to come to the U.S. where they experience even greater insecurity (Groody: 18). A Catholic outlook does not provide a facile solution to the dilemma of how to handle the estimated 12-14 million undocumented immigrants presently residing in the U.S., nor a predetermined calculus for balancing the needs of the national common good against our duties to a more universal common good. Catholic teaching does, however, set clear limits upon legitimate reasons for exclusion and call us to hospitality and justice rooted in its biblical and encyclical traditions. On the one hand, fear and hatred have fueled an increasingly hostile climate for immigrants. On the other hand, not all who have misgivings about earned legalization programs or other proposed reforms are simply racist. People on all sides of the immigration issue seem to

agree the current system is broken, and it has become increasingly evident that we cannot simply “enforce our way out of this problem.”<sup>1</sup>

[2] The Catholic common good perspective demands we analyze immigration in its broader contexts and in light of our core commitments to universal human dignity and social solidarity. Immigration is not merely a security issue or even a legal issue. In light of the scope of Catholic concern and multifaceted dimensions of migration, we must also understand immigration as entailing family values, economics, trade policy and criminal justice, to begin. It is incumbent upon citizen-disciples to unmask and analyze the human impact of current policies in all of these arenas. The failures of the present system and of Congressional efforts to update it have issued dire consequences: a significant increase in border deaths, smuggling networks, prolonged family separation, harmful raids, a patchwork of local ordinances criminalizing different activities of immigrants and those who “harbor” them, and the creation of an underclass. Catholic commitments to welcoming the vulnerable, safeguarding the family, and fostering solidarity indicate that these are not just outcomes. We turn first to what the tradition has to say about migration more generally to anchor our discernment.

### **Immigration and the Catholic Tradition**

[3] The Christian faith brings rich resources to bear on the complicated questions of immigration, perhaps unsurprising with its central figure himself a refugee fleeing Herod’s terror and then an itinerant preacher. In terms of Hebrew and Christian scriptures, the formative liberation of Israel by God from enslavement by the Egyptians led to commandments regarding hospitality to strangers (Exodus 23:9; Leviticus 19:33). Indeed after the commandment to worship one God, no moral imperative is repeated more frequently in the Old Testament than the command to care for the stranger (O’Neill: 20-21). The people of Israel are repeatedly commanded not to exploit the oppressed and the vulnerable, also relevant categories for a consideration of immigrant workers (Proverbs 31:8-9; Ecclesiastes 4:8-9; Jeremiah 22:3-4; Zechariah 7:8-11). When Joseph, Mary, and Jesus flee to Egypt, the émigré Holy Family becomes the archetype for every refugee family (Pius XII: intro.). In Jesus’ parables such as the Good Samaritan and the Last Judgment, he identifies neighbor love and just living with care for the vulnerable stranger among us. In *Deus caritas est*, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that neighbor love enjoined by the Good Samaritan parable can no longer be limited to “the closely knit community of a single country or people.” Rather, “Anyone who needs me, and whom I can help, is my neighbor...Love of God and love of neighbor have become one: In the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God” (Benedict: no. 15). Who constitutes our neighbors does not depend on birthplace or possession of documents (DiMarzio 2006: 204). Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are not only replete with injunctions regarding hospitality to strangers, but also with examples of families uprooted and migrating: from Abraham, Jacob and Moses to Mary and Joseph, scriptural examples reveal a pattern not unlike what economic refugees

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Chertoff and Tom Ridge of the Department of Homeland Security have agreed we cannot simply enforce our way out of the current immigration problem. See American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA).

face today: “Families are forced to uproot themselves, leaving behind their homes, their relatives and friends, the security of their lands and their provisions, the familiarity of their language and support of their communities” (Sanchez:19-20).

[4] Rooted in this scriptural heritage and in its expansive understanding of human rights and the common good, the Catholic social tradition upholds twin rights to emigration and immigration, placing the onus on states that would restrict immigration to make the moral case for exclusion. Included in the tradition’s articulation of social and economic rights is the affirmation that persons have the right to fulfill those rights in their homeland; if they cannot support themselves or their families in their country of origin, they possess the right to migrate to do so (John XIII: no. 106; USCCB: 2003: no. 34-35). This right to migrate is also rooted in the universal destination of created goods, such that state sovereignty “cannot be exaggerated” to the point that access to land is denied to needy people from other nations, provided that the national common good “rightly understood” does not forbid it (Pius XII: no. 51). A key component of the right to migrate, then, is its inclusion of economic rights violations alongside political oppression as legitimate causal factors.<sup>2</sup>

[5] While the social tradition of the Catholic Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their borders, (as with the right to private property), this is not an absolute right. In their pastoral letter “Strangers no Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” the U.S. and Mexican bishops’ conferences emphasize the presumption of migration and reception over sovereignty in light of the contemporary situation of global poverty and persecution (USCCB 2003: no. 39). They judge nations like the U.S. which “have the ability to protect and feed their residents [to] have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows” (USCCB 2003 no. 36). The bishops’ conferences assert that the right of a sovereign state to control its borders in order to promote the common good and the human right to migrate in order to realize God-given rights are complementary, for while reasonable limits may be set, the common good is served when basic human rights are not violated. Contemporary “push factors” driving much of the immigration to the U.S. and the treatment of the undocumented within its borders threaten the common good.

[6] We need not restrict our reflection to scriptural and traditional references to migration *per se*; the foundations of Catholic social thought explored throughout this symposium, the sacred and social vision of the human person, provide a touchstone for analyzing the current situation with respect to matters of immigration. Our tradition of human rights with particular attention to the experiences of the most vulnerable among us directly challenges contemporary practices and attitudes that dehumanize immigrants. In what follows I examine ways in which a Catholic commitment to intrinsic human dignity and global solidarity assist in prudential discernment about the impact of our present immigration structures and proposed reforms.

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<sup>2</sup> The 1969 Instruction on Pastoral Care asserts that “where a state which suffers from poverty combined with great population cannot supply such use of goods to its inhabitants...people possess a right to emigrate, to select a new home in foreign lands and to seek conditions of life worthy of man” (Sacred Congregation for Bishops: no. 14). For a helpful discussion of Catholic teaching on economic refugees, see Christiansen: 90-91.

### A Commitment to Human Dignity Challenges Patterns of Dehumanization

[7] Over the past decade the U.S. has tripled its border agents, quintupled its budget and toughened enforcement strategies, yet there have been record levels of undocumented immigration during the same period (AILA: 11). Border buildup and anti-immigrant legislation seem to place migrants at greater risk of marginalization, exploitation and death rather than serve as effective deterrents. An enforcement-only approach fails to address root causes of migration and drives immigrants working to support their families into the shadows. At a general level, the current reality of 12 million undocumented immigrants residing in the U.S. has fostered a widespread general conception of immigrants as threatening the rule of law, social cohesion, and the nation's economic health. In extreme cases, anti-immigrant sentiment has led to the demonization of populations of color through increasingly mainstream (media) outlets, as evidenced by the 25% increase in anti-Hispanic hate crimes since 2004.<sup>3</sup> The scapegoating of immigrants for various social ills and the perpetuation of a false narrative of a border under siege have been fueled over recent decades by Cold War hysteria, economic woes, and, most recently, 9/11 (Massey, Durand, and Malone: 84-87). As the events of September 11 placed unlawful entry into the U.S. in a national security context, politicians and others have all but conflated southwestern border crossings with the security breaches of large-scale, violent consequence. Even though no terrorists have been caught along the southwestern border, fear mongering and scapegoating of undocumented immigrants has been on the rise. Campaign rhetoric surrounding this election season has identified toughness on crime or terror with favoring restrictive or punitive immigration policies.

[8] Contemporary proponents of an ethnic or ethno-cultural nationalism who decry the "large numbers of immigrants who threaten to dilute, if not overwhelm, U.S. 'Western' culture," recall U.S. nativist attacks on immigrant waves in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries whose countries of origin (Southern and Eastern Europe) or (Catholic) religion was deemed "incompatible with democratic values" (Kerwin). Immigration scholar Bill Ong Hing notes that as Asian and Latino immigrants began to take advantage of the family-based immigration system in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, policymakers began to attack family reunification categories, charging unassimilated immigrants jeopardized cohesion (Hing: 118-19). He notes that thinly veiled racism and xenophobia were reflected in concerns raised in congressional testimony about the "environmental and social costs" to the American "quality of life" by mostly nonwhite immigrants (Hing 120).

[9] Faithful citizens must remain vigilant about pervasive attitudes that shape us at least as influentially as gospel values, such as the role of the media and political rhetoric in sustaining such ethnocultural nationalism, misplaced fear, or racism. A Christian anthropology sharply critiques dehumanizing practices from hate crimes to scapegoating, for "[t]he person is the subject of migration and not its object" (DiMarzio 2007: 192). The centrality of human

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<sup>3</sup> Since 2004 the number of anti-Hispanic hate crimes is up 25%, according to the FBI (Ramirez: 14). Hate groups exploiting the issue of illegal immigration have also been on the rise in recent years. See Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform 2007 for their discussion of the proliferation of hate crimes/groups as documented by the Southern Poverty Law Center and Anti-Defamation League.

dignity and agency in Christian ethics challenges discourse and practices that are driven by xenophobic fears.

[10] While we in the U.S. may demonize and scapegoat immigrants, we gladly accept their sweat and taxes. Violations of human dignity arise once undocumented immigrants make their way into the workplace as well, however. Undocumented migrants comprise three-quarters of the day labor force, and as a result of laborers' dire need, precarious vulnerability, and deterrence from contesting such abuses by overt and covert threats, violations of basic labor standards have become a taken-for-granted feature of day-labor markets (Valenzuela, Theodore, Melendez, and Gonzalez: 22). Widespread exploitation ranges from wage theft to physical violence. In fact in a recent nationwide study of day laborers, 66% of day laborers interviewed here in the Midwest were denied payment, and 1 in 3 reported on-the-job injuries (Valenzuela et al.: 12-14). Catholic social teaching explicitly protects the basic human rights of undocumented migrants in host countries, grounded in an inviolable human dignity that knows no borders.<sup>4</sup> Over recent decades social encyclicals have enumerated migrant rights to life and a means of livelihood; decent housing; education of their children; humane working conditions; public profession of religion; and to have such rights recognized and respected by host government policies.<sup>5</sup>

[11] Since its inception the social encyclical tradition has forcefully defended the rights of workers that flow from these human rights in view of a particular understanding of human work as necessarily "intelligent and free" (Paul VI 1992b: no. 28). To begin with, the explicit teaching from *Rerum novarum* on with respect to rights to just wages and the injustice of employers' oppressing or defrauding employees clearly prohibits patterns of underpayment and wage theft (Leo XII 1992: no. 20; Catechism 1995: #2434). As Leo XIII warns,

. . . the rich and employers must remember that no laws, either human or divine, permit them for their own profit to oppress the needy and the wretched or to seek gain from another's want. To defraud anyone of the wage due him is a great crime that calls down avenging wrath from Heaven: Behold the wages of the laborers . . . which have been kept back by you unjustly, cry out: and their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts (James 5:4) (1992: no. 20).

Rooted in this history, the Catholic social tradition demands benefits beyond just wages that are also routinely denied undocumented laborers, such as safe working conditions and health care assistance, especially in the case of on-the-job injuries (John Paul II 1999: no. 9). More recent papal and episcopal documents have made explicit the fact that these basic economic rights "are not invalidated or relinquished when one crosses a border" (DiMarzio 2006: 203).

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<sup>4</sup> John Paul II "reiterates the rights of migrants and their families and the respect for human dignity 'even in cases of non-legal immigration.'" (1999: no. 65).

<sup>5</sup> See Sacred Congregation for Bishops: no. 7; Paul VI 1992a: no. 17; John XIII: no. 106; USCCB 1976; and USCCB 2003: no. 38. The tradition insists that the Church must remain a vigilant advocate on behalf of the rights of migrants and their families without documentation, from John Paul II's *Ecclesia in America* to the Mexican and U.S. Bishops "Strangers No Longer" to the ongoing advocacy of the U.S. Catholic Church on local, national and international levels.

In *Laborem exercens*, for example, Pope John Paul II explicitly condemns the social and financial exploitation of migrant or seasonal workers in light of the fundamental value of work and inalienable human rights. He roots these standards in the familiar yet fundamental principle of Catholic economic ethics, that “. . . the hierarchy of values and the profound meaning of work itself require that capital should be at the service of labor and not labor at the service of capital” (1992a: no. 23).

### **A Commitment to Solidarity Challenges Commodification**

[12] This hierarchy of values brings us to our next consideration of how Catholic values contextualize and critique immigration matters. Many with misgivings about the current state of illegal immigration are neither xenophobic nor condone exploitation, yet a commitment to the virtue of solidarity elucidates and challenges more subtly entrenched perspectives, such as the market mentality that pervades much of U.S. practices and discourse regarding immigration. The Catholic vision shares certain commitments of a democracy like the United States, but it radically challenges a culture that prioritizes economic efficiency over solidarity with the weak and marginalized, or narrow national interest over global concern. The tendency to prioritize capital to persons helps foster the dehumanizing conditions that generate economic refugees<sup>6</sup> and exploit undocumented immigrant workers. Catholic anthropological, scriptural and social teachings strongly challenge patterns of commodification that treat immigrants as mere economic units, failing to recognize their full humanity. The incongruence of the present system, given labor demands and practices, exhibits a civil societal deficit indicating an overextension of the market: for example, undocumented laborers who are integrated chiefly through the market have no recourse to redress the labor abuses noted above, and local and state communities have proven ill equipped to pay the social and humanitarian costs of recent enforcement raids (Capps, Castaneda, Chaudry, and Santos: 68). An examination of the impact of selectively securing the border and of prolonged family separation reveals the detrimental effects of the priority of market logic to social solidarity.

[13] We encounter this operative value hierarchy in the asymmetry of southwestern border fortification, on the one hand, and the nearly negligible surveillance of containers entering U.S. ports and the free flow of capital on the other. In contrast to increased border fortification, only 2% of containers entering U.S. ports are checked, highlighting this priority of capital to persons in related policy considerations. Following the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 (IRCA), the U.S. has pursued what some call “a politics of contradiction – simultaneously moving toward integration while insisting on separation [from Mexico].” In the ensuing years we encounter the U.S.’s move to “a consolidation of markets for capital, goods, commodities, and information, but

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<sup>6</sup> For example, as Lisa Sowle Cahill points out, “at the level of global economics and politics, the Euro-American emphasis on individual rights has turned into a model for unconstrained corporate behavior that has had pernicious effects on the survival of families in other parts of the world . . . the ability of marriages and families to remain intact and support women and children is often endangered or made impossible when traditional societies and means of livelihood are disrupted, for example, when young adults, especially men, leave their families to seek urban employment or emigrate abroad to find work” (Cahill: 380).

simultaneously to pretend that North American labor markets would remain separate and distinct” (Massey et al.: 73-74).

[14] The consequent mismatches between labor and capital flow, and between labor needs and legal avenues for low wage work, have contributed, in large part, to the present situation of undocumented immigration. A massive decline in manufacturing jobs and increase in service jobs in the U.S. in recent years have caused the market for low wage jobs to increase; thus the jobs already exist in contrast to myths that “they” are coming to take “our” jobs. Recent figures indicate U.S. immigration laws supply only 5,000 permanent H2A and H2B visas, whereas the labor market demands an estimated 500,000 full-time low-skilled service jobs per year.<sup>7</sup> On the receiving end of these migration patterns there exists a considerable disparity between labor realities and immigration policy. For most Mexicans answer to the inevitable question of why immigrants do not “get in line” to secure a legal opportunity to obtain more dignified wages is that there is no line to enter. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, of those 5,000 permanent unskilled visas, in 2005 *two* went to Mexican legal immigrants. That year about 500,000 unskilled Mexican workers crossed the border to work without documents, and most found willing employers (Clarke: 15). (Cardinal Roger Mahony and others have critiqued our practice of simultaneously posting “No Trespassing” and “Help Wanted” signs in this country). Many predict that continued demographic challenges will sustain a demand for greater low wage labor output than native workers can accommodate: native born fertility rates are falling, the workforce is aging and becoming better educated, and the labor force participation rate is flattening, yet the economy is creating a large number of less-skilled jobs (AILA: 18).

[15] On the sending end, the aggregate impact of NAFTA or CAFTA is complex and debatable. Most agree they have taken a negative toll on the most vulnerable populations in Latin America, who rely more than ever on remittances sent home by family members who migrate to the U.S. This January the bishops of Mexico directly linked the recent surge in immigration to the U.S. to the effects of NAFTA on small rural communities whose farmers are unable to compete with heavily subsidized producers north of their border (Kavanaugh: 8). Free trade treaties “aggressively pursue one form of integration, market, while ignoring other forms (e.g., labor, welfare, social, cultural).” For example, “NAFTA’s exclusive focus on market integration assumes the market is civically indifferent: the market and society are separate spheres with little interaction between them” (Steck: 168). The global citizenship enjoined on Christians sharply challenges the patterns of unequal interdependence evidenced by these narrowly market-based relationships.

[16] A commitment to global solidarity at least demands a more integrated relationship with neighboring trade “partners” than the purely market-based one now dominating. From this view nations must understand themselves as collectively responsible for the international order and consequently the challenges posed by migration patterns. Such international conversion requires “a transformation of the present, often opportunistic interdependency

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<sup>7</sup> During his testimony before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Frank Sharry, Executive Director of the National Immigration Forum, added, “[t]his tiny category is so backlogged it has been rendered useless. As the Immigration Policy Center recently pointed out, of the other 15 immigrant visa categories available for employment and training, only two are available to industries that require little or no formal training.”

among nations into something that grows out of a moral commitment to the global common good” (Steck: 164).

[17] The idolatrous objectification of workers as mere tools of production makes it easier to ignore immigrants’ value and responsibilities as mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, daughters, and sons. Immigration is also a family issue, and current policies and practices that prevent immigrant workers from attaining or maintaining family unity likewise treat them as economic units, rather than recognizing their full humanity. Sustained family separation facilitated by current policies has a negative impact upon the social fabric within the U.S. as well as in immigrants’ countries of origin. Family unity promotes the stability, health and economic productivity of family members, each with social consequences. By contrast, family separation can have enduring detrimental effects. In many families children grow up without knowing one or more parent; loneliness and isolation cause stress that can also lead to family disintegration and even pose public health risks.

[18] The harmful impact of family separation is poignantly evident in recent workplace raids. For the approximately five million U.S. children with at least one undocumented parent, more than three million of whom are U.S. citizens, the recent surge in workplace and door-to-door arrests pose risks of family separation, economic hardship and psychological trauma.<sup>8</sup> Not only are children emotionally, developmentally and financially dependent upon their parents, many of the children at risk are well integrated into their schools and communities in the only nation they have known as home (Capps et al.: 1). Since its creation in 2003, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has dramatically enhanced its efforts to combat unlawful immigrant employment, increasing worksite administrative arrests more than sevenfold (Capps et al.: 10). For every two immigrants apprehended in workplace raids, one child is left without proper care or support, suggesting that potentially thousands of children have been separated from their parents as a result of recent raids. Fully two-thirds of affected children are U.S. citizens or legal residents and the large majority of those affected are infants, toddlers and preschoolers (Capps et al.: ii). Immigration raids are ostensibly intended to deter undocumented adults from working, but an Urban Institute study on the recent raids indicates they have adverse effects on families ranging from sudden poverty to the psychological effects of trauma. Wider community tensions, primarily marked by polarization between Latino immigrants and other residents, have also resulted. Further, raids may serve to dismantle trust between immigrant and law enforcement communities, risking unreported crimes, and divert public attention away from the need for systemic reform.

[19] More broadly, the present outmoded visa system that disrupts family unity dehumanizes immigrants and compromises the common good. The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA)’s provision requiring citizens and legal permanent residents to earn 125% of the federal poverty level “has closed the door to legal immigration for many Mexican and Central American applicants” (Rodriguez and Hagan: 331). Long backlogs in family reunification categories have developed in recent years since the number of visas available annually is less than the number of prospective immigrants who await

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<sup>8</sup> Workplace arrests increased more than sevenfold from 500 in 2002 to 3,600 in 2006.

visas.<sup>9</sup> Since migrants follow well-established pathways, “an equal allocation of visas across countries only generates long backlogs and excessive clandestine migration” from the most closely linked countries. Conversely visas could reflect differences and remain ethnically neutral, reflecting economic and historical ties (Massey et al.: 156-57).

[20] Flowing from its social anthropology, Catholic ethics defends the sanctity of the family as “domestic church,” and its value as the cradle of society that fosters its welfare. Both personal and social development are intimately connected to the health of the family, a school of deeper humanity. Catholic social thought on the family advances “an authentic family humanism,” integrating a family’s intimate communion with its charge to mutually engage the broader social good (John Paul II 1981: no. 7). If families serve as basic cells of civil society, social conditions must protect and ensure their participation in the demands and benefits of the common good. On the contrary, deprivation of dignified labor opportunities and traumatic enforcement mechanisms signify hostile social forces impeding social engagement and access to social goods. Visa backlogs and abrupt raids further indicate the priority of market logic over a commitment to social solidarity or even much trumpeted “family values.”

[21] Whether in the utilitarian, cost-benefit analyses at play in proposed “point systems,” the priority of capital to labor, or the reduction of family members to economic units, the dominance of commodification pervades immigration matters as thoroughly as it contradicts fundamental Christian values. The consequences of federal inaction on comprehensive reform have been grave for families and communities, and an enforcement-only or purely market-based approach will remain practically ineffective, as well. So fundamental is the human desire for communion and provision for one’s family that failure to allow family members to make a decent living and re/unite will only continue to encourage undocumented migration.

## Conclusion

[22] The current situation is multifaceted and is rife with challenges to core Catholic commitments. The realities of illegal immigration present a more complex story than that of willful lawbreaking, particularly when we consider the inadequacy and impact of current law, the failure of approaches that begin and end with enforcement, and Christian commitments to natural law, which calls into question human structures that enable exploitation and dehumanization.

[23] The option a Catholic perspective makes on behalf of the vulnerable turns our attention toward enabling the participation of the marginalized regardless of legal status, particularly those who survive harrowing border crossings only to experience exploitation in our legal system and labor market. The transcendent telos of the common good helps us to refrain

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<sup>9</sup> As of early 2008 there are backlogs in all categories of family-based immigration (excepting the spouses/children/parents of U.S. citizens for which there are no per-country or category ceilings). For example, a spouse or child of a U.S. lawful permanent resident must wait almost five years before receiving a visa (as long as ten if coming from Mexico), while citizens petitioning a sibling can expect an eleven-year wait. Backlogs are so long that immigrants sometime switch categories and move from one long line to another while they wait as they age or get married.

from elevating current law to an idolatrous status. A framework rooted in a biblical justice that is relational, effusive, and marked by mercy prompts us to challenge the near-universal framing of “amnesty” as a contemptible procedure. It also demands we move beyond pitting the rights of U.S. workers against those of international workers. Economists disagree on the impact of undocumented immigrant labor on wages and employment levels of native-born workers (Peri: 2; Borjas).<sup>10</sup> According the former legal status would buoy the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers since they would no longer be competing with undocumented workers forced to accept submarket wages and working conditions (AILA: 13).

[24] If Latin American migrants generally seek labor markets due to dire poverty, unemployment and underemployment, and lack of future job opportunities, not simply the prospect of a relatively better standard of living, it is necessary then to consider the institutional practices of the U.S. that contribute to the migration patterns on its soil (Maradiaga: 4; Groody: 17). Many have noted “the U.S. policy has dealt more with the symptoms of immigration than the causes, and, until the government implements more comprehensive strategies that deal with the economic, political, and social ills of both countries, Mexicans will continue to migrate to the United States” (Groody: 20). John Paul II referred to world’s refugee crisis as “the festering of a wound,” and in his 1995 message for World Migration Day ultimately concluded that elimination of global underdevelopment is the antidote to illegal immigration (John Paul II 1992b: no. 24; John Paul II 1995: no. 2). “[I]nternational migration should be approached not simply as a domestic political issue but as an international issue linked to broader matters of trade and geopolitics” (Massey et al.: 157).

[25] Elements we have examined above call Christians to guard against the temptations of narrow nationalism, the idolatry of the market, and demonizing the other. From repentance we are called to social conversion toward interdependence in solidarity. As the U.S. and Mexican bishops note, “[p]art of the process of conversion of mind and heart deals with confronting attitudes of cultural superiority, indifference, and racism; accepting migrants not as foreboding aliens, terrorists or economic threats, but as persons with dignity and rights, revealing the presence of Christ; and recognizing migrants as bearers of deep cultural values and rich faith traditions” (USCCB 2003: no. 40). To place social sins such as xenophobia “in the context of the common good . . . means not simply to view them as behavioral failures that require exhorting individuals . . . to mutual friendship, benevolence, and aid, but rather as parts of an overall puzzle involving social structures and collective action” (Barbieri: 749). This conversion also shifts our focus away from criminalization and fortification and toward identifying lasting solutions such as global development, trade marked by justice, and paths to citizenship for those already here.

[26] The principles elevated here do not yield a precise roadmap for immigration reform *per se*, but they do suggest the general outline of a prudential response to the contemporary situation. Over the past several years, the U.S. bishops and their allies in the “Justice for

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<sup>10</sup> For example, economist Giovanni Peri indicates the presence of immigrant labor increases U.S. workers’ incomes by 1.1% whereas George Borjas estimates a 10% influx of immigrant workers reduces low-wage native workers earners’ weekly income by 3-4%.

Immigrants Campaign” have called for comprehensive reform of current immigration laws and policies to better respond to “the realities of separated families and labor demands that compel people to immigrate to the United States, whether in an authorized or unauthorized fashion.” The elements they have proposed as essential to any comprehensive reform bill remain crucial given the multidimensional realities we have begun to explore here: 1) an earned legalization program for the undocumented already here with a path to permanent residency; 2) a new worker visa program that protects both U.S. and foreign-born workers’ rights with the opportunity to gain permanent residency; 3) the reform of the family-based preference system to ensure timely reunification; 4) the restoration of due process protections and access to essential public programs for immigrants; and 5) policies that address the root causes of migration such as lack of sustainable development in sending countries (Wenski).

[27] Other coalitions have coupled these reforms with proposals for creating and implementing “a smart, refocused border security and enforcement regime that respects core principles of due process; addressing the multi-year backlogs in family and employment-based immigration” (AILA: 9); allotting more Mexican visas; mitigating the local costs of accommodation (e.g. federal revenue sharing should disperse funds to states with large immigrant populations, by having populations used in the revenue formula reflect foreign born residents) (Massey et al.: 158-63); and examining the immigration issue with Mexico as part of the entire bilateral relationship, including economic and trade considerations (Wenski: 11).

[28] Taken together, such comprehensive measures can begin to serve both justice and security, foster solidarity, and reduce undocumented migration. In contrast to the legal bottom line or a market mentality, the conciliar conception of the family as generations helping one another to “harmonize personal rights with the other requirements of social life,” offers a vision particularly well suited to more justly confronting the challenges posed by the human casualties of a global economy and forced migration (Second Vatican Council: no. 52).

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