

Your Favorite Page

⇒ King Ozymandias of Assyria was running low on cash after years of war with the Hittites. His last great possession was the Star of the Euphrates, the most valuable diamond in the ancient world. Desperate, he went to Croesus, the pawn broker, to ask for a loan. Croesus said, "I'll give you 100,000 dinars for it." "But I paid a million dinars for it," the King protested. "Don't you know who I am? I am the king!" Croesus replied, "When you wish to pawn a Star, makes no difference who you are."

⇒ Evidence has been found that William Tell and his family were avid bowlers. However, all the Swiss league records were unfortunately destroyed in a fire, and we'll never know for whom the Tells bowled.

⇒ A man rushed into a busy doctor's office and shouted "Doctor! I think I'm shrinking!!" The doctor calmly responded, "Now, settle down. You'll just have to be a little patient."

⇒ A marine biologist developed a race of genetically engineered dolphins that could live forever if they were fed a steady diet of seagulls. One day, his supply of the birds ran out, so he had to go out and trap some more. On the way back, he spied two lions asleep on the road. Afraid to wake them, he gingerly stepped over them. Immediately, he was arrested and charged with transporting gulls across sedate lions for immortal porpoises.

⇒ Back in the 1800s, the Tates Watch Company of Massachusetts wanted to produce other products and, since they already made the cases for watches, they used them to produce compasses. The new compasses were so bad that people often ended up in Canada or Mexico rather than California. This, of course, is the origin of the expression, "He who has a Tates is lost!"

⇒ A thief broke into the local police station and stole all the toilets and urinals, leaving no clues. A spokesperson was quoted as saying, "We have absolutely nothing to go on."

⇒ An Indian chief was feeling very sick, so he summoned the medicine man. After a brief examination, the medicine man took out a long, thin strip of elk rawhide and gave it to the chief, telling him to bite off, chew, and swallow one inch of the leather every day. After a month, the medicine man returned to see how the chief was feeling. The chief shrugged and said, "The thong is ended, but the malady lingers on."

⇒ A famous Viking explorer returned home from a voyage and found his name missing from the town register. His wife insisted on complaining to the local civic official who apologized profusely saying, "I must have taken Leif off my census."

⇒ There were three Indian squaws. One slept on a deer skin, one slept on an elk skin, and the third slept on a hippopotamus skin. All three became pregnant, and the first two each had a single baby boy. The one who slept on the hippopotamus skin had twin boys. This goes to prove that the squaw of the hippopotamus is equal to the sons of the squaws of the other two hides.

⇒ A skeptical anthropologist was cataloging South American folk remedies with the assistance of a tribal medicine man, who indicated that the leaves of a particular fern were a sure cure for any case of constipation. When the anthropologist expressed his doubts, the medicine man looked him in the eye and said, "Let me tell you, with fronds like these, who needs enemas?"

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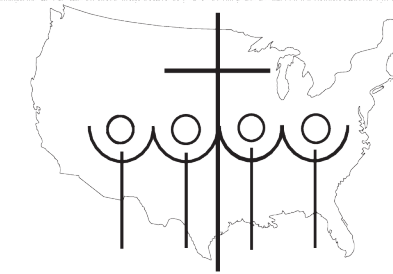
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LINKS

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November 16, 2010

Greetings, my friend!

I'm writing this note right at Halloween. In a few days it will be All Saints Day, then All Souls Day...two of my favorite feasts of the Church Year. Then will come Election Day, and I'm so grateful that those god-awful political commercials will be off the air. I repeat the promise of the last newsletter: we CSC's continue to remember your beloved dead in our Masses and prayers during the month of November. This note will be coming to you before Thanksgiving...and as always, you provide me with plenty of reason for gratitude. I cherish your companionship on the journey, and all that you do for Holy Cross.

Given the mention of Halloween, I hafta say that day always brings out a bit of prankishness in me. For example, the last two years I've really wanted to get a god-awful ugly mask and pull it over my head while driving around South Bend. Then, at stop lights, just hope the person(s) in the car next to me see me – and watch them jump!! I'm such a wuss that I haven't tried it tho...might get shot or something. The best Halloween ever was at St. Joe Parish in South Bend. Someone sent me a life-size rubber tarantula....the rubber was of a kind that would cling to a semi-glossed wall, and then slowly flip its way down the wall. So I'd go into an office, distract the occupant for a moment, and flip the tarantula high up on the wall. Then I'd stand by, innocently conversing, until the thing came into view or they saw it out of the corner of their eye. The moral of the story: when I'm around, be very wary.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL

As our Christmas gift to you, the Holy Cross priests, brothers and seminarians will be remembering you and yours at Mass and in prayer during the Christmas Season (December 24-January 9). If you have others you wish to have remembered by name, fill out the prayer slip and send it back. No offering is required, but if you choose to send one, it will be used for the needs of the Seminary and of Holy Cross House.

So given this streak of orneriness or prankishness, I'm not surprised Santa marks me down as a bad boy and gives me lumps of coal for gifts. Sigh.

When I asked folks (via an earlier Cross Links) if they wanted to read what the American bishops and Vatican have said about hot-button social issues, I was surprised by the number of affirmative responses, and especially by the number that mentioned immigration. So that is the reflection on the next two pages. Now please remember three things: 1) I am not trying to convey my opinion, except at the end; 2) I'm trying to keep a balanced perspective; and 3) keep in mind the distinction between moral values and policy. The bishops speak to moral values, and if we are faithful to our Church's teachings, there is not much wiggle room. When talking about policy, however, there is plenty of room for reasonable debate and intelligent discussion concerning how to bring about the fulfillment of the moral value of rights for immigrants. I pray so hard for the "reasonable" and "intelligent" part of that equation.

The seven of us in the Development Office (Terry, Jim, Nancy, Tami, Carol, Kim, and myself) wish you and your family a delight-full Thanksgiving. May your Christmas and New Year's be equally special. I'll be spending a few days at Christmas down at my sister's in Suwanee, GA....Mom and Dad will join us there. Thank you again for everything...for who you are, for all you do, for all you enable Holy Cross to do.

Love.....Hugs.....and Peace!!!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fr. Herb".

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND IMMIGRATION

It was just after midnight when José and Maria grabbed their backpacks and left the village. José's pack was heavy, for Maria also had to carry their baby. They had to leave early because a desert stood between them and their destination, and travel had to be done at night to avoid the sun's killing heat. In addition, the night hid the young couple from spying eyes... government agents were after them because provincial authorities thought they were part of a political conspiracy to overthrow the government.

Fear of being robbed and killed made every sense alert as José and Marie traveled by night through the desert. When they came to the border, they crossed the river, again under cover of darkness. José breathed a little easier...the family might be caught by the immigration agents, but at least they wouldn't be killed now. With another night's travel, they came to a small town, rented a home no questions asked, and José settled in as a reliable local handyman. Maria and the baby prospered in the safety of their new home and in the comfort of their new friends and neighbors.

If you haven't figured it out by now, the above is the story of Joseph and Mary's flight into Egypt with the child Jesus. I wonder what kind of welcome "José and Maria" would have received in the United States?

The Church's teaching on immigration has its roots in several places. First of course, is the Holy Family's flight into Egypt. Second, there is the witness of Sacred Scripture. In the Old Testament. "Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were an alien in Egypt" (*Ex 22.21*). "When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt" (*Lev 19.33*). "Do not take advantage ...of an alien living in one of your towns. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and counting on it" (*Dt 24.14*). In Leviticus: "You are to have the same law for the alien and the native-born" (*24.22*). In harvest time, the Israelites were not to go over the land a second time; instead, they were to leave what remained for the alien, the widow, the fatherless (*Dt. 24.19f*). Time and again the prophets warn Israel against oppressing the alien, the widows, the fatherless lest the Lord give vent to his wrath.

Though not as numerous, there are Old Testament citations that the alien must obey the law of Moses, particularly in regard to religious practices. For example, they are to follow the Sabbath rules. On the Passover,

anyone – native or alien – who eats yeasted bread shall be cut off from the community. As for the Passover itself, no foreigner may eat of it, nor can a temporary resident or hired hand. They may not offer human sacrifice.

In the New Testament, there are few specific references to treatment of aliens or immigrants, so anyone who asks "What would Jesus do with immigration?" won't find much information. Being a faithful Jew, he would have followed the Law of Moses as mentioned above. In the judgment scene from Matthew, Jesus does mention the reward given to those who invited the stranger into their homes. We can infer how he feels about the stranger in his midst by the way he treated the women who followed him, the Samaritan women at the well, the Roman centurion, sinners and outcasts. There is also that wonderful story in Luke where the woman whose daughter had a hemorrhage challenges Jesus: "Even the dogs eat the scraps from their master's table."

As far as I recall, Paul's letters have nothing on immigration as such. He does mention several times that we ourselves are aliens upon the earth, and that our true home is in heaven. Of interest here is that the word "parishioner" is related to the Greek word *paroikos*, which means "wayfarer" or "sojourner." A parish, then, is a community of migrants, and migration itself is a metaphor for humanity, as all people pass through life on the way to their final destination back to God.

While the Popes have over the years made many remarks on immigration, in general they have left the enunciation of the moral values in immigration to the national conferences of bishops. Here in this country, our bishops speak not only from a biblical foundation, but also from a historical perspective. In 1776, 1% of the population of the 13 colonies was Catholic. By the end of the 19th century, the Catholic population had swelled tremendously. Anti-immigrant sentiment emerged in society and in the Church as Irish and other newcomers dramatically changed US society and the Church's face. In 1920, three of four U.S. Catholics were immigrants, and it is for these immigrants that the Church created its vast network of schools, charities and hospitals. Back in the 1970's and '80's, it was refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos who fled to this nation and whom the Church supported. In recent years it is Latino immigrants who have drawn the most attention and assistance. The Church is also taking steps to support Muslim immigrants, who are the newest targets of vilification.

Critics have said that the reason the Church is so eager to make things easy for Hispanic immigrants is because it fills the church's pews and coffers. Not so. In the present immigration debate, we – the Catholic Church – are only doing what we have always done: protecting basic human rights and fostering human dignity and the welfare of families.

The most important document on immigration was jointly issued by the American and Mexican bishops in February 2003. The title of the pastoral is *Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope*. It calls for a **comprehensive** approach to immigration reform. This document built on principles articulated in two other pastoral statements (*One Family Under God in 1995 and Unity in Diversity in 2000*). All three of these documents can be found on-line. What follows is a summary of *Strangers*.

I highlight the word "comprehensive." Illegal and legal immigration is a world-wide problem. The bishops focused not just on Latino migration into the USA, but linked immigration to the problem of global poverty, political repression, and religious persecution...things which force people to migrate to other countries to find a safe and secure life for themselves and their families. The Church has always said that people have the right **not** to migrate; that is, they should be able to live freely in their countries of birth and have their basic human needs and rights met. However, when this is impossible the Church says they have a right to migrate, and nations have a duty to receive them.

Now when you hear the words "duty to receive them," hackles may rise. But be aware that the Catholic Church in the United States (and elsewhere) does **NOT** support open borders, illegal immigration, or an "amnesty" that would grant legal status to all unauthorized immigrants. It believes nations have a legitimate and necessary responsibility to promote the common good by denying admission to certain migrants, and by regulating the flow of all those who are seeking to enter, legally or illegally.

Read that last sentence carefully: it's at the heart of the virulent criticism directed at the Church. When it comes to immigrant rights and immigrant policy, what the Church is focusing on are the illegal immigrants **presently** in this country. We're not saying "Open the doors and let anyone in." No. The Church supports enacting or tightening laws that will prevent further illegal immigration and protect our national security

and sovereignty, provided human rights and dignity are respected. However, the bishops advocate allowing unauthorized immigrants **presently in the US** to earn the right to remain (permanently) through their labor, good moral character, and payment of a fine as a form of proportional punishment. Keeping families together is also a paramount moral value.

Now here I want to add a thought of my own.....

I have every expectation that the debate over immigration policy will bring violent verbal or physical reaction...it's already been happening. Immigration issues have always produced reactive violence based on fear. The economic, social, and political aspects of immigration – no matter what country is dealing with it – have caused controversy regarding ethnicity, economic benefits, jobs for non-immigrants, settlement patterns, health care, impact on upward social mobility, crime, and voting behavior.

Every nation and tribe of every age of human history has had trouble with immigrants. When homo sapiens moved into present-day Europe after the Ice Age, Cro-Magnon man reacted. The Roman Empire reacted to the Hun and Magyar peoples. Ditto for England and the Normans, Russia and the Vikings, native peoples of the New World versus European colonists and treasure seekers, Native Americans to westward expansion, black migration to the north after the Civil War, rural poor to the cities. In the 1890's laws were passed in the US restricting entry of Jews, Italians, and Slavs. The same happened with the Irish vs. Americans in the 20's, Germans and Japanese in the 40's. Violence against these nationalities was endemic. Internationally, Pakistan and India brawl over immigration of Hindus and Muslims. Europe grapples with Muslims and Roma (Gypsies). Up until 1972, Australia had a whites-only immigration policy. Palestinians fought back against Jewish immigration, and now the ultra-orthodox Jews behind Mr. Netanyahu's government want to restrict immigration of non-orthodox Jews. Japan has always been somewhat hostile to non-Japanese immigrants. And on and on and on it goes.

Fear of foreigners persists through history. And I guess the question is this: do we let fear rule our Christian moral responsibilities, or do we hear Jesus' words: "Fear is useless; what is needed is trust."