



Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Although not the national focus of the current political discussion, just under the surface is the question of how to address the issue of as many as 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States and the inflow of 400,000 new undocumented aliens each year. As we approach Thanksgiving and the coming holidays we invite you to consider and pray about the situation.

For many, perhaps the majority of our nation, there is a line drawn in the sand, and it starts with the word **ILLEGAL**.

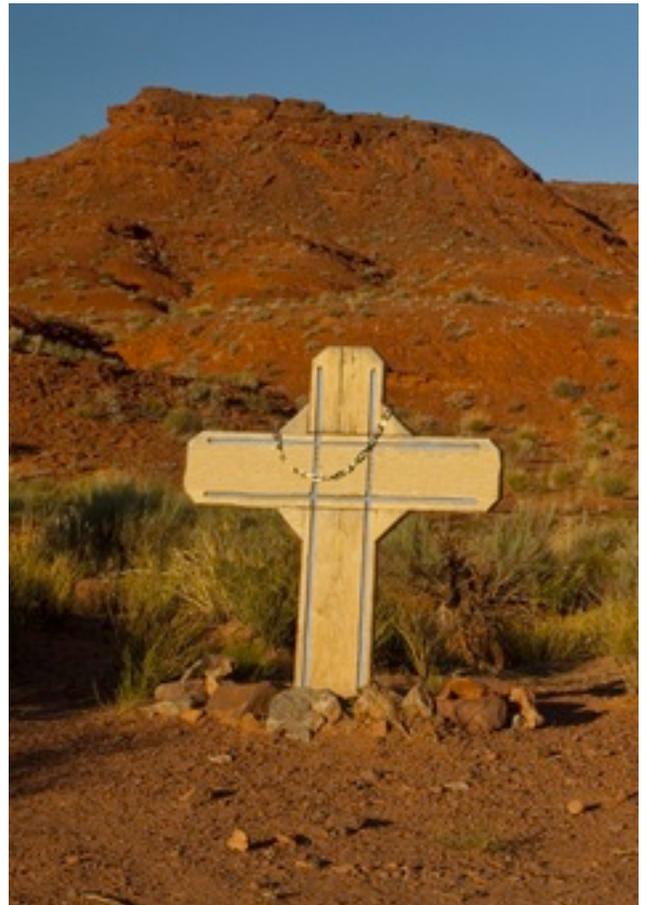
As 27-year veteran US Border Patrol worker David Stoddard put it, "Either an alien has legally entered the United States or he has not. The legal alien is entitled to benefits and services. The others are not."

Many sum it up this way: They broke the law. They must be deported. What part of illegal don't you understand?

Among the important facts on this issue is that the United States generously accepts more legal immigrants each year than any other country in the world.

Is it not reasonable, indeed the responsible thing to do, to tighten our borders and expel those not from our country who do not follow our laws? Consider the alternative. There are a billion people in the world who live on \$1 a day or less, should the United States take them all in?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has consistently advocated for comprehensive changes to our immigration laws. These proposed changes can not be thoughtfully considered if one is not able to get any further than the word ILLEGAL and lose all compassion for the situation. Is that line drawn in the sand for you? Please consider the following information.



Are they criminals?

Undocumented immigrants are not necessarily criminals. Undocumented entry into the United States is a violation of civil law, not criminal law. We violate civil law when we don't follow a traffic ordinance. We violate criminal law when we steal a car.

Do you see Jesus in the undocumented immigrant?

Does the following scripture awaken compassion in you? Does it have anything to do with undocumented immigrants?

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

“You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels.” Exodus 23:9

“Let the weak and the orphan have justice, be fair to the wretched and destitute.” Psalm 82: 3

In the last 15 years 4,000 people have died in the desert trying to enter the United States.

“Yahweh is always on the side of the oppressed.” Psalm 103: 6

“You must love your neighbor as yourself.” Mark 12:31



Catholic Social teaching states that when people “are unable to find work and support themselves and their families, they have a right to migrate to other countries and work...migrants who are forced to leave their homes out of necessity and seek only to survive and support their families must be given special consideration.”

Many make a distinction between legal and moral. That which is morally correct is not always legal. For instance, it is illegal to drive faster than the speed limit, but if you are rushing someone to the hospital who is having a heart attack, is it morally acceptable?

If you could not find work, would you consider breaking the law to help your starving family?

The Catholic Church does not encourage undocumented immigration. It supports repairing a broken law. Read a 2010 quote from Archbishop Schnurr’s letter in the Catholic Telegraph:

“Each year, Congress allocates only 5,000 permanent visas for ‘unskilled workers,’ even though hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants are finding jobs in this category. In addition, the spouses, children and other immediate relatives of many of those who did enter legally end up having to wait years to be reunited with their loved ones. For example, a man from Mexico who would be fortunate enough to get a permanent employment visa to work here would still have to wait about four years before his wife and children could join him. For a Filipino to have his brother or sister come join him, it would take 22 years!”

Learn more

by visiting our Archdiocesan website at CatholicCincinnati.org/socialaction.

by visiting Justiceforimmigrants.org