

Immigration

- A Catholic Response -

Church of Saint Pascal Baylon
September 19, 2017

7:00

A. IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

- global = 214 million
- U.S. = 43 million foreign born 13.5% of U.S. population

1. Immigrants

a) numbers

- 675,000 limit for FY 2016
- Asians = fastest growing (3.4% yrly.) esp. from India & China
- Hispanics = 2.2%
- native white = 0.5%

*** Minnesota: 7.4% = foreign born

b) unauthorized

1) reasons for coming - need jobs

- better life

- **U.S. economy needs foreign workers**

2) immigration policy - family-based

- employment-based

3) present trends

4) questionable claims / misconceptions

-- Jobs: "They are taking jobs from American workers."

-- Crime: "They commit so many crimes."

- native-born incarceration rates: 3.3 %

- immigrant incarceration rates: 1.6 %

-- English: "They won't learn English."

-- Taxes: "They don't pay taxes."

- 2013 paid \$11.6 billion in state & local taxes,

\$ 6-7 billion in Soc. Sec. & Medicare

2. Refugees

a) Numbers - 85,000 (2016) - 110,000 (2017) - 50,000 (Trump admin.)

*** Minnesota: 2300 (FY 2016)

- including from:

- Syria – 25
- Ethiopia – 166
- Myanmar – 723
- Somalia - 1100

b) Reasons for coming - well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of:

- Race
- Religion
- Membership in a particular social group
- Political opinion
- National origin

c) Refugee resettlement program (18 to 24 months)

- UN High Commissioner for Refugees
- U.S. Embassy in host country
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- State Department
- FBI
- Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (in U.S.)

7:45 Questions / Discussion

8:00 Break

8:10 Pope Francis' Challenge

1. Biblical foundations

- Genesis 12:1-2 - Leviticus 19:33-34 - Matthew 25:35

2. A Christian way of viewing immigrants and refugees

- "Migrants and refugees are not pawns on a chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more." (World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2014)

- "Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in Ecclesial communities prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need. (World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2015)

3. A Christian response to immigrants and refugees

- "Christian compassion – this 'suffering with' compassion -- is expressed first of all in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard." (Pastoral Care of Migrants Council, May 24, 2013)

- "In our time, migration is growing worldwide. Refugees and people fleeing from their homes challenge individuals and communities, and their traditional ways of life; at times they upset the cultural and social horizons which they encounter. . . . Those who migrate are forced to change . . . even those who welcome them are also forced to change. How can we experience these changes not as obstacles to genuine development, rather as opportunities for genuine human, social and spiritual growth?" (World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2016)

- "Indifference and silence lead to complicity whenever we stand by as people are dying of suffocation, starvation violence and shipwreck." (World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2016)

- " 'Where is your brother? His blood cries out to me,' says the Lord. This is not a question directed to others; it is a question directed to me, to you, to each of us. These brothers and sisters of ours were trying to escape difficult situations to find some serenity and peace; they were looking for a better place for themselves and their families, but instead they found death. How often do such people fail to find understanding, fail to find acceptance, fail to find solidarity. And their cry rises up to God." (Homily at Lampedusa, July 8, 2013)

a) Our nation

- a) Right to control borders
- b) The purpose of our resources

II. Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families

34. The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right. *(Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope)*

b) Our church

- a) Bishops - teachings
- b) Parishes – opportunities

8:40

c) Ourselves

What is one thing we as Catholic Christians can do in response to what Pope Francis is saying and what the Gospels say about welcoming the stranger?

Resources

1. Catholic Legal Immigration Network (www.cliniclegal.org)
2. Justice for Immigrants (USCCB) (www.justiceforimmigrants.org)
3. American Immigration Council (www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org)
4. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (www.itep.org)
5. Immigrant Legal Resource Center (www.ilrc.org)
6. Migration Policy Institute (www.migrationpolicy.org)
7. *Immigration and the Next America : Renewing the Soul of Our Nation*. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez. Our Sunday Visitor, 2013.
8. *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible*. M. Daniel Carroll. Brazos Press, 2008.
9. *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*. U.S. Catholic Bishops. USCCB, 2000.
10. *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. U.S. and Mexican Catholic Bishops. USCCB, 2003.