

**The Catholic Campaign for Justice for Immigrant Reform**  
**Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh – Adult Groups & Youth Ministry**  
**Part III of a Four Part Series**

*In the Church no one is a stranger, and the Church is not foreign to anyone, anywhere. As a sacrament of unity and thus a sign and a binding force for the whole human race, the Church is the place where illegal immigrants are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various Dioceses actively to ensure that these people who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood in the Christian community.*

*1995 World Migration Day, Pope John Paul II*

*Scripture*

*Exodus 16:13;15-18* In the evening quails camp and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents’”. The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

*Psalms 103:6* Yahweh, who does what is right, is always on the side of the oppressed.

*Ecclesiasticus 4:8-9* To the poor man lend an ear, and return his greeting courteously. Save the oppressed from the hand of the oppressor, and do not be mean-spirited in your judgements.

*Micah 6:8* What is good has been explained to you; this is what Yahweh asks of you; only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.

*Mark 10:42-45* You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many.

*Luke 6:37-38* Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

*Church Documents*

Even in the harsh stories of migration, God is present, revealing himself. Abraham stepped out in faith to respond to God’s call (Gn 12:1). He and Sarah extended bounteous hospitality to three strangers who were actually a manifestation of the Lord, and this became a paradigm for the response to strangers of Abraham’s descendants. The grace of God even broke through situations of sin in the forced migration of the children of Jacob: Joseph, sold into slavery, eventually became the savior of his family (Gen 37:45)... The key events in the history of the Chosen People of enslavement by the Egyptians and of liberation by God led to commandments regarding strangers (Ex 23:9; Lv 19:33)

*Strangers No Longer, Bishops of Mexico & U.S., 2003*

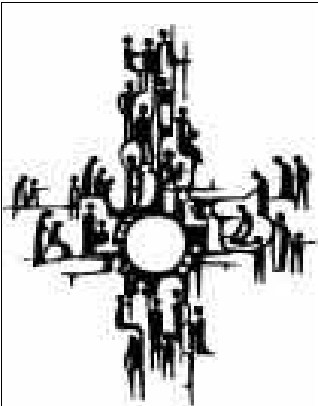
As pastors to more than ninety million Mexican Catholics and sixty-five million U.S. Catholics, we witness the human consequences of migration in the life of society every day. We witness the vulnerability of our people involved in all sides of the migration phenomenon, including families devastated by the loss of loved ones who have undertaken the migration journey and children left alone when parents are removed from them. We observe the struggles of landowners and enforcement personnel who seek to preserve the common good without violating the dignity of the migrant. And we share in the concern of religious and social service providers who, without violating civil law, attempt to respond to the migrant knocking at the door.

*Strangers No Longer, Bishops of Mexico & U.S., 2003*

This Council lays stress on reverence for the human person; all people must consider their every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account, first of all, life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus.

*Gaudium et Spes, 1965*

Solidarity... is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.. Solidarity is a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God’s triune intimate life... *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, Pope John Paul II, 1987*



#### Preparation

Newsprint and Marker. Prepare one newsprint sheet with the list of Themes of Catholic Social Teaching from session II.

Pages 1, 3 and 4. For page 4 fold paper so that answers are hidden.

For in-depth learning and preparation, visit [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org) – The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform

#### Opening Prayer (handout page 3)

##### Introduction:

Invite everyone to share their thoughts/experiences of the week in regards to Part I and II of the series. “Today we will look deeper into the issues facing immigrant families, and immigration reform.

Handout Page 4, Immigration – True/false (make sure it is folded so that answers are not showing).

Discuss answers. Ask, do any of these true/false statements surprise you? These cover some of the myths surrounding the subject of immigration. Can you think of others?

##### Handout Page 3: *Some Root Causes of Immigration Issues*

Read these either silently or in pairs. Point out the Themes of Catholic Social Teaching from session II and have participants keep these in mind while reading.

Explain: these are very short answers to very complex elements of the immigration issue. However, we can get a feel for the impact the issue of immigration has on all peoples, and the common good.

Discuss: Taking each heading of our list of root causes, what does our faith and Catholic social teaching require? How does solidarity in this issue advance justice? The common good? What is our role in all of this?

Handout Page 1 for take home reflection and prayer. During the week, ask participants to check out: The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform at [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org) – who are participants? The Catholic Campaign against Poverty at [www.povertyusa.org](http://www.povertyusa.org) – take the poverty quiz.

Next session we will reflect on our response.

Closing Prayer: Group intercessions and Our Father...

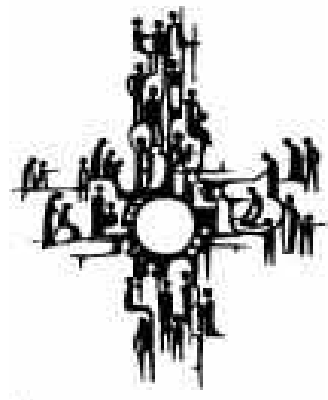
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Four Part Series on Immigrants  
Brothers/Sisters All  
Catholic Social Teaching  
Issues for Immigrants  
Our Response



## Opening Prayer

Blessed are the wanderers and those adrift.  
Blessed are the strangers at our door.  
Blessed are the unfed, the homeless on the road.  
Blessed is the child crying in pain.  
Blessed is the mother working to provide for her children left behind  
in her native country.  
Blessed are those who welcome Christ to be born again  
when they welcome these ones.  
Blessed are we who struggle to make a place in our hearts  
for all of our brothers and sisters.  
Amen.



## Some Root Causes of Immigration Issues

### **Globalization**

The poorest countries of the world account for only .4% of international trade, yet they lose an estimated \$700 billion a year due to unfair trade rules. "Globalization can work when both parties are about equal economically; in such cases it stimulates progress and rewards effort. But the case is quite different when the nations involved are far from equal... Trade relations can no longer be based solely on the principle of free, unchecked competition." *Populum Progressio*, Pope Paul VI, 1967.

The bishops recognize that the conditions that compel people to leave their homes out of desperation and lack of opportunities to provide for themselves and their families, must be addressed if an effective and comprehensive response to migration is to be achieved. Therefore, the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform works closely with the Catholic Campaign Against Poverty. Both are integrally linked and through more just trade policy, aid and debt reforms, the rights and needs of all – across borders – can be met.

### **Permanent Resident Visa Quotas**

By legalizing the 11 million undocumented already in the country, we would know who was here in the country. Legal status could be "earned" through paid fines and over time. By creating a temporary worker program and improving family migration, we also would know who is coming. Our nation's economy demands foreign labor, yet there are insufficient visas to meet this demand. Close family members of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents face interminable separations, sometime of twenty years or longer, for unification, due to backlogs of available visas. U.S. immigration laws and policies need to be updated to reflect these realities.

### **Supply and demand of low-skill labor**

Insufficient legal avenues for immigrant to enter the U.S. compared with the number of jobs in need of workers has significantly contributed to the large number of undocumented persons in the U.S. Our nation's economy demands foreign labor, yet there are insufficient visas to meet this demand. The bishops state that undocumented immigration is not good for society or the migrant. In some cases, it is not good for the U.S. worker because it can drive down wages. Thus the recommendation for immigration reform to change the status quo so that a legal immigrant work force can bargain for higher wages, driving up wages for everyone. Migrant workers labor in low-skill but important jobs, such as agricultural workers, construction workers, and service personnel. As President Bush has stated, many Americans are not working for those jobs or competing for them.

### **Border Enforcement**

About 75% of today's immigrants have legal permanent (immigrant) visas: of the 11 million undocumented persons in the U.S. today, 40% have not crossed the border, but have overstayed temporary non-immigrant visas.

From 1986 to 1998 the Border Patrol's budget increased six-fold, and the number of agents doubled to 8,500. The Border Patrol also toughened its enforcement strategy, pushing migrants into dangerous desert areas, in hopes of deterring crossings. Instead, the undocumented immigrant population doubled in that timeframe.

The bishops support the right of the sovereign nation to control its borders. That is not the issue. The issue is that the immigration system, which includes enforcement, is flawed and needs repair. We need a new approach. We believe that by reforming the legal immigration system, we will take pressure off of the enforcement side and relieve the pressure on our border.

### **Criminal / not criminal**

The Church does not condone or encourage illegal immigration because it is not good for society or for the immigrant who lives outside the law and in the shadows. Those in the U.S. without legal status have broken the law, a civil law, not a criminal law, and they do so in order to survive and to support and/or unify with their families. These people are working hard, paying taxes and contributing to our economy and life here in the U.S.

## Immigration – True/false

1. Immigrants take jobs from U.S. workers. True/False
2. The U.S. is being overwhelmed by immigrants today. True/False
3. Most immigrants come into the U.S. legally. True/False
4. Immigrants use services for which they do not pay. True/False
5. Immigrants resist learning English and integrating into U.S. society. True/False
6. U.S. immigrant policies are based on family, work, and freedom. True/False
7. Americans born in the U.S. exhibit much greater rates of entrepreneurship than immigrants. True/False
8. The American bishops support assistance for all immigrants in the U.S. True/False
9. Globalization policies today have effected the increase in immigration supply and demand. True/False
10. The U.S. Catholic Bishops want to give “amnesty” to illegal immigrants. True/False

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### Answers

1. F. The U.S. Dept. of Labor has concluded that immigrants keep U.S. industries competitive, increase employment through higher rates of self-employment and do not take jobs. During the 1990s, half of all new workers were foreign-born, and filled gaps left by native-born workers in both the high and low-skill ends of the job spectrum and do not compete for the same jobs.
2. F. A study by the Immigration Policy Center found that employment in about 1/3 of all U.S. job categories would not have been able to expand and may even have contracted due to a lack of workers during the 1990s without immigrants coming. As of 2000 about 10.4% of the U.S. population was foreign-born, most settling in Texas, Florida, California and New York.
3. T. 8 of 11 immigrants arrive in the U.S. legally. Of the undocumented, 40% enter on legal student or tourist visas and stay beyond the expiration date.
4. F. Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for almost all public benefits, including unemployment and social security, but they pay for these programs through taxes and payroll deductions. State and local governments struggle because payroll deductions go to the Federal Treasury, while health, education and social service costs are paid by state and local governments. All immigrants, regardless of status, will pay on average \$80,000 per capita more in taxes than they use in government services over their lifetime, with the Social Security gaining the most.
5. F. The demand for English classes far outstrip the supply.
6. T. 80% of legal immigrants are arriving to join family members. The second priority is skilled workers when there are no qualified Americans to fill the job. The third priority for admission is for those fleeing persecution.
7. T. Immigrants and American citizens show remarkably similar rates of entrepreneurship, with about 1 in 9 of both groups being self-employed.
8. F. “Without condoning undocumented migration, the Church supports the human rights of all people and offers them care no matter what the circumstances of entry into this country.
9. T. According to the Pew Hispanic Center, the number of immigrants to the U.S. from Mexico decreased by 18% 3 years before the North American Free Trade Agreement’s (NAFTA) implementation. But since NAFTA, the annual number of immigrants has increased by more than 61%.
10. F. The Church’s position is not amnesty. The 11 million current undocumented workers would pay a fine and work for 6 years prior to being eligible for a green card. Thus they would be “earning” the right to remain in the country. Immigration reform should be such that the undocumented status would no longer be a necessity for those seeking entry to the U.S.

Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform