



What Leaders are Saying about Immigration

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Vatican City, JUNE 5, 2005

...Recalling this great bishop, (Blessed Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, bishop and patron of immigrants) my thoughts go to those who are far from their homeland and often also from their families; I hope that they will always meet receptive friends and hearts on their path who are capable of supporting them in the difficulties of every day.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Message for World Migration Day 2000

The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness. (No.6)

[We are called to work] so that every person's dignity is respected, the immigrant is welcomed as a brother or sister, and all humanity forms a united family which knows how to appreciate with discernment the different cultures which comprise it. (No. 5)

Ecclesia in America

In its history, America has experienced many immigrations, as waves of men and women came to its various regions in the hope of a better future... The Church is well aware of the problems created by this situation and is committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among these immigrant people, in order to help them settle in their new land and to foster a welcoming attitude among the local population, in the belief that a mutual openness will bring enrichment to all. (January 23, 1999, No. 65)

Migrants should be met with a hospitable and welcoming attitude which can encourage them to become part of the Church's life, always with due regard for their freedom and their specific cultural identity. (January 23, 1999, No. 65)

THE MOST REVEREND KEVIN FARRELL, AUXILIARY BISHOP OF WASHINGTON AND MEMBER OF THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS COMMITTEE ON MIGRATION

From the viewpoint of the U.S. bishops, it has been apparent for several years that our immigration system is broken and badly in need of repair. The U.S. Bishops are united in the view that migration is beneficial to our nation—economically, socially, and culturally. The strength of our nation comes from its diversity and from the hard work and contributions of immigrants who have come to our shores over the past two hundred years. It is our identity and our soul.

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

February 2, 2005, State of the Union Address

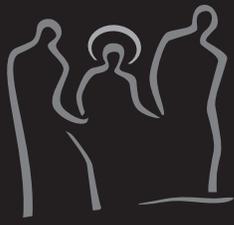
America's immigration system is also outdated — unsuited to the needs of our economy and to the values of our country. We should not be content with laws that punish hardworking people who want only to provide for their families, and deny businesses willing workers, and invite chaos at our border. It is time for an immigration policy that permits temporary guest workers to fill jobs Americans will not take, that rejects amnesty, that tells us who is entering and leaving our country, and that closes the border to drug dealers and terrorists.

LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON, AFL-CIO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

June 15, 2005, Statement at Immigrant Worker Rights Press Briefing

Immigrants in this country are coming under attack... the wave of anti-immigrant sentiment has grown to tidal size and right now immigrant workers in this country need immediate and aggressive action by all of us in their defense. We are working harder and closer than ever before to combat the rebirth of these ugly anti-immigrant forces.

We cannot shy away from the cruel fact that immigrants are systematically denied their most basic rights both as workers and as human beings. Too often, employers don't pay them their wages, retaliate against them for exercising their legal rights, discriminate against them because they're immigrants, and forcefully interfere when they try to improve their wages and working conditions through forming unions...



JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS *a journey of hope*

ALAN GREENSPAN, FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIRMAN

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently spoke on immigration in response to a question from the House of Representative Financial Services Committee:

I think that immigration has been very important to the success of this country and I fully support it. I'm not sure I would want to give the reason that we're creating immigration to support our Social Security system. I think we ought to do it on the grounds that it is good for the country but not because it helps the Social Security fund — because that then suggests that if we find other means to solve the Social Security problem that we shouldn't be expanding immigration and I would not support that.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Everywhere immigrants have enriched and strengthened the fabric of American life.

THE MOST REVEREND NICHOLAS DiMARZIO, BISHOP OF BROOKLYN

October 4, 2003, Statement at the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride

The reality is that our current system is immoral. While many may condemn the presence of the undocumented in our land, we willingly accept their hard labor, their contributions to our economy, and their cultural and religious spirit which enriches our local communities. While we accept these contributions, we do so at the expense of the human beings who come here—not to harm us but to help us. They are often ridiculed, exploited, and abused. This must stop, and this immoral system must be changed.

THE MOST REVEREND GERALD R. BARNES, BISHOP OF SAN BERNARDINO

December 10, 2003, Statement on the Repeal of California SB 60

Let us, Christians and Non-Christians alike, join in a civil discourse over the complex issues of immigration that acknowledges the enormous contributions being made by our immigrant peoples. Together, let us seek solutions to this issue that treat all with the respect and dignity due to every human being, every son and daughter of God.

HIS EMINENCE THEODORE CARDINAL McCARRICK, ARCHBISHOP OF WASHINGTON

June 2, 2005, Editorial in the Catholic Standard, "To be Clear"

We need a strong and clear immigration policy. It must serve our country's security and prosperity and at the same time be based on the moral values on which all our lives must ultimately rest. We must never forget the Gospel call of Jesus "to welcome the stranger" for in the face of this stranger, we see the face of Christ.

R. BRUCE JOSTEN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Immigration issues have always been complex, but our nation's safety and financial viability depends on the answer. It is time for the administration and Congress to grapple with these difficult questions and move forward with real solutions.

HIS EMINENCE ROGER MAHONY, ARCHBISHOP OF LOS ANGELES

*June 1, 2005, Editorial in the Los Angeles Times,
"A Nation That Should Know Better"*

Providing a clear route to legal status for longtime residents and providing legal entry to migrants would not only help cure the excesses of a flawed system but ensure that our nation benefits from the contributions of immigrants participating as full members of their communities. Although some in the public square consider any such rule changes a reward for lawbreakers, we should look at the issue holistically and realistically, and understand that the current law is unjust and must be changed.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Remember, remember always, that all of us... are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.

MOST REVEREND JAMES TAMAYO, BISHOP OF LAREDO

*May 10, 2005, Statement at the Justice for Immigrants
Launching Press Conference*

We can no longer accept a situation in which some public officials and members of our communities scapegoat immigrants at the same time our nation benefits from their labor. We can no longer accept a status quo in which migrants are compelled to risk their lives in order to support their families. We can no longer accept a reality in which migrants fill jobs critical to Americans and U.S. employers without receiving appropriate wages and benefits. We can no longer tolerate the death of human beings in the desert.

JOHN SWEENEY, AFL-CIO PRESIDENT

April 20, 2005, Statement on the Senate Immigration Debate

...As the only organization in our country dedicated exclusively to standing up for working people and their families it is our job to continue our fight for ensuring the rights and freedoms of all workers regardless of their immigration status.

MOST REVEREND THOMAS WENSKI, BISHOP OF ORLANDO

May 13, 2005, Column "U.S. immigration policy outdated and unjust toward working Immigrants."

The so-called "illegals" are so not because they wish to defy the law; but, because the law does not provide them with any channels to regularize their status in our country – which needs their labor: they are not breaking the law, the law is breaking them.