

I am writing this article on Monday, January 20th, the federal holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the inauguration day for President Donald Trump. I know both hopes and fears are great right now at the beginning of this presidency with the early focus being on immigration. Cardinal Cupich has asked that his letter on how the Church can support immigrants in these uncertain times be made available to you. It is in this bulletin, please read it.

The Church reminds us that a country has two duties, the first being: *“The more prosperous nations are obliged as they are able to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2241). We are certainly a prosperous nation that people long to come to find a better life. The American Dream is still sought after by many. Consider how the Holy Family had to flee to Egypt when the Lord was being hunted by King Herod and the Israelites were regularly reminded by God to not abuse or take advantage of the “resident alien” or immigrants among them.

We probably all know people, I know I do, who are not citizens yet but would like to be and they are both hard working, faithful and productive members of society and they come from many countries, not just Central or South America. Some people may just want to come to the U.S. on a work visa but many want to set up roots and be grateful citizens, which is what our country was built on. We should be open and generous to those who really want to be U.S citizens to build up the communities they live in. Having said these true things, a country also has a duty to maintain law and order for the common good, for we cannot give what we do not have.

The second duty a country has is to control the process of immigration and have legitimate expectations of immigrants: *“Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants' duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.”* (CCC 2241).

We have all witnessed the scandal of not having much security or process at the southern border which has led cities like our own, which are far away, to be stretched in our housing and social benefits beyond our capacity. Also, a non-secure border increases the horror of human and drug trafficking.

I’m sure we all hope that while criminals guilty of offenses other than being undocumented might be deported, that the good people trying to become U.S. citizens will still be given that chance. Cardinal Cupich’s letter includes a link with many resources available by the Church, including legal aid for those who might need advocacy, Catholic Charities for housing, and other supports.

Let us pray and be convinced that we can as a country both maintain a just order and process at our borders while at the same time allowing a reasonable pathway to citizenship for the many good people who want to be a part of and support this great country. As intentional Catholic disciples of Jesus we can and should be both pro-order and pro-immigrant at the same time.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Mike