

### Update on the JFI Campaign

Although there is not much action on Capitol Hill these days on immigration, the Core Members of the **Justice for Immigrants** campaign continue to meet monthly to keep the issue alive. Each organization continues to promote the principles of the campaign by educating the public, especially Catholics on the Church's social teaching on migration. Core member organizations continue to send letters to Congress opposing legislation that would be harmful to immigrants. Additionally, members of the Legislative Strategy Team (including the **Irish Apostolate USA**) have made to visits to Capitol Hill, specifically to oppose the SAVE Act (HR 4088) introduced by Congressman Heath Shuler (SC) because this bill contains unworkable enforcement-only provisions and does NOT contain real solutions to our immigration problems.

Several U.S. bishops have continued to speak out on the broken immigration system. Bishop Thomas Wenski (Diocese of Orlando) sent a letter to the Presidential candidates (see excerpt below) asking them to not vilify immigrants in their quest for votes. Bishop John Wester (Diocese of Salt Lake City) recently wrote an op-ed piece for the local paper on the need for comprehensive immigration reform. In March, Catholic and other faith leaders will come together to discuss the problems facing our nation regarding immigration and discuss how they can provide a moral voice in the debate.



### Wenski to Candidates: Speak Truth on Immigration

**Stop demonizing and scapegoating, bishop says.**

“One of the more disturbing aspects of the presidential campaign has been the searing attacks by some of the presidential contenders on undocumented immigrants. Labeling them as “illegals,” candidates are using immigrants as scapegoats for the larger issues besetting our country: a slow economy, an inadequate health-care system, an unpopular war and, most particularly, a broken immigration system. Such populism might win some votes on the fringes, but it portends bad policy decisions in the future.”

The entire article can be found on the Irish Apostolate website: <http://www.usairish.org/index.html>

### 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of JFK's *A Nation of Immigrants*



This book by John F. Kennedy has been republished on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and is available through most book stores.

In the introduction, Senator Edward Kennedy writes: *“Immigration reform is an opportunity to be true to our ideals as a nation. At the heart of the issue of immigration is hope. Hope for a better life for hard-working people and their families. Hope for their children. Martin Luther King Jr. had a dream that children would be judged solely the “the content of their character.” That dream will never die. I believe that we will soon succeed in*

*enacting the kind of reform that our ideals and national security demand.*

*As we continue the battle, we will have ample inspiration in the lives of the immigrants all around us.... They come to our country with their hearts and minds full of hope. I believe we can build the kind of tough, fair and practical reform that is worthy of our shared history as immigrants and as Americans."*

So much of what JFK wrote 50 years ago is applicable today.

**KNOW YOUR RIGHTS - Individuals who enter the United States under the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), as visitors for 90 days, are subject to certain restrictions. Most notably, an individual who entered under the VWP has no right to a hearing before an immigration judge if they become deportable by overstaying their 90 day status or by committing certain crimes. If such an individual comes to the attention of the Department of Homeland Security, they will be detained and removed without further ado. No hearing, no waiver, no rights!**

For complete details on legal and constitutional rights in the USA, go to the Emerald Isle Immigration Center website: <http://www.eiic.org/knowrights.htm>

### **Bush Prods Congress to Pass Immigration Reform**

President George W. Bush called on the US Congress Monday to address illegal immigration in "a sensible and humane way," after failing twice in two years to pass sweeping reforms on the problem.

"America needs to secure our borders," Bush told the legislature in his annual State of the Union address.

"We are increasing worksite enforcement, we are deploying fences and

advanced technologies to stop illegal crossings, we have effectively ended the policy of 'catch and release' at the border, and by the end of this year, we will have doubled the number of border patrol agents."

However, he added: "We also need to acknowledge that we will never fully secure our border until we create a lawful way for foreign workers to come here and support our economy."

"We must also find a sensible and humane way to deal with people here illegally," he said.

"Illegal immigration is complicated, but it can be resolved," the US president said. "And it must be resolved in a way that upholds both our laws and our highest ideals."

Three years ago Bush made reforms to deal with some 12 million illegal immigrants a key goal of his second four-year term in office. But hardliners in his own Republican Party in Congress blocked the first effort in 2006 and a second one in 2007. Illegal immigration since has become a top issue in the race to replace Bush next year, especially among Republican candidates, most of whom have taken a tough position in favor of a crackdown.

*Source: AFP*

### **The Root Causes of Migration**

Poverty, injustice and armed conflict displace millions of people across the globe. In the past 30 years, the number of international migrants has more than doubled, to an estimated 191 million worldwide. (1) These include economic migrants compelled to move to provide for their families, refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing persecution, and victims of human trafficking. The vast majority are economic migrants who have few options to remain in their countries of origin. There are roughly 30 to 40 million undocumented migrants worldwide, comprising around 15–20 percent of the world's migrant population. An

understanding of the forces that favor or necessitate migration is necessary if we are to maximize benefits and minimize harm to migrants, their families, and sending and receiving nations.

Read about the **Push factors** drive people from sending countries and the **Pull factors** that draw people north to seek a better life on the Maryland Catholic Conference Website: <http://www.mdccathcon.org/whereallfindahome>

### Truth About Illegal Immigration and Crime

Anti-immigration forces have been hammering into our heads the dangerous link between illegal immigration and increases in violent crime. Their only problem: the facts don't support their alarmist contentions.

To read the entire article, go to: <http://americas.irc-online.org/am/4903>

### Can't Fool the Faithful: Immigration is a Moral Issue, Not a Political Football

By: Interfaith Immigration Coalition

The hateful, anti-immigrant rhetoric overrunning the radio frequencies and permeating the presidential campaigns isn't going over well with people of faith.

Christians especially are sick of hearing their right-wing comrades reject Christ's loving example of extending perfect justice and perfect mercy. Deporting innocent children, denying life-saving services to the elderly and chronically ill, and refusing undocumented individuals any process by which to earn their legal status beg the question of how often these anti-immigrant, political Christians actually read the Bible.

"How would Jesus treat immigrants?" is a profound question which

has yet to be asked by the media or explored by Bible-quoting politicians.

If politicians are to benefit from openly expressing their faith, they should have to answer these tough questions. Can we honestly see Jesus building walls, calling people "illegal," and playing to basic fears in a rabid attempt to slap a bandaid on our broken immigration system? Hardly.

Pastors and people in the pews know that inhumane raids, deportations, local anti-immigration ordinances, and racist sentiment against various groups of immigrants fly in the face of the Lord's admonitions to not "oppress the stranger" (Ex. 23:9) or "pervert the judgment of the stranger" (Deut. 24:17). Instead, the Lord taught us to "love the stranger as ourselves" (Lev. 19:34), and "allow the stranger to live among us" (Lev. 25:35). Christ's teachings in the New Testament reaffirm the Lord's commandments of inclusion by urging us to welcome the stranger. He promises that as we provide for the stranger (or "alien," NIV), we are serving Him (Matt. 25:35-40). How many of these politicians really want to deport Jesus?

People of faith know that our country's broken immigration system does not justify breaking apart families and ruining lives. Immigration is a moral issue because it is a people issue – a family issue. People of God want to engage politicians in a conversation involving the global causes of migration, trade regulations, inalienable rights of health and education, eradicating racism and segregation, misconceptions of the economic impacts of immigration, and what they can do as a community to triumph over hate and to welcome the stranger. In discussing immigration reform, we need our politicians – especially those running for president – to put away the rhetoric, the slogans, the sound bites, and candidly talk with the American people about fixing our backlogged visa system, helping families stay together and prosper, and allowing undocumented immigrants in our communities to earn their legal status. Only

then can these politicians accurately profess to follow the teachings of Christ.

*These are the opinions of Jen Smyers, Associate for Immigration and Refugee Policy of Church World Service, and Bill Mefford, Director of Civil and Human Rights for the United Methodist Church Board of Church and Society; they do not necessarily reflect the views of the entire coalition.*

Various members of the Interfaith Immigration Coalition are writing weekly op-ed pieces for this website:

<http://www.streetprophets.com/story/2008/1/16/143958/307>

### **Last Summer's Immigration Raid Believed to be Retaliatory**

Critics of last summer's immigration raid in New Haven say they now have proof that federal agents conducted those raids in retaliation for the city's resident ID program.

Mayor John Destefano and others say an email -- obtained by the Associated Press -- shows that regional immigration and customs enforcement officers told the agency's director about the ID program one day after it was adopted.

"This was a planned fugitive operation, that had been planned months in advance, and it was not retaliatory," Paul Grenier, an ICE Spokesperson said. "ICE's job is to enforce the nation's immigration and custom laws."

*Source: WTNH News, CT*

### **One Argument, 12 Million Holes New York Times Editorial**

The big fat immigration bill that died last year in Congress was, for all its flaws, an anchor that kept debate tethered firmly to reality. Like it or not, it contained specific remedies for the border and the workplace. It had a plan for clearing backlogs in legal immigration and managing its future flow. Perhaps most critical, it dealt with the 12

million illegal immigrants already here, through a tough path to earned citizenship.

Unmoored from a comprehensive federal bill, the debate was pushed into the states and is now floating in the La-La Land of the presidential campaign. The Republicans have been battling over the sincerity of their sound bites and trying to make their fixation on one dimension of the problem — tough border and workplace enforcement — sound like the solution.

But it isn't, of course, because it ignores the fundamental question of what to do about the undocumented 12 million.

For the entire article, go to: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/18/opinion/18fri1.html?ex=1201323600&en=2a24798932320d5a&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

### **Making The H1-B Visa Quota -- USCIS Begins Accepting H1-B Visa Applications On April 1, 2008**

On April 1, 2008, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) begins accepting H1-B visa applications for the 2009 fiscal year. Last year, the USCIS reached its H1-B visa quota in one day. By late afternoon on April 2, 2007, the USCIS received approximately 150, 000 H1-B applications and had to resort to a random selection process to select applications which fell within the quota. All applications which were not selected or applications filed after April 3, 2007 were returned.

*Source: Immigrant's Weekly*

### **Some Who Voted for Sanctions Seek Rollback**

Some state lawmakers who backed Arizona's new employer sanctions law last year now are pushing to dilute some of its provisions.

Rep. Bill Konopnicki, R-Safford, prime sponsor of the rollback, wants the law altered so a firm cannot lose its license to do business for having an undocumented worker on the payroll unless the worker was hired after the law took effect Jan. 1.

He said it's not fair to punish employers who had no opportunity to verify the legal status of new workers through the federal government's E-Verify database program, as required by the sanctions law. Further, Konopnicki wants to require prosecutors to prove "regular, repeated and intentional actions" of illegal hiring before a license could be suspended or revoked. Companies would not be penalized for "isolated, sporadic or accidental acts."

Konopnicki's bills also would limit the types of licenses a judge could take away, a move Rep. Russell Pearce, R-Mesa, who crafted the original measure, said could exempt more than half of Arizona businesses from any type of punishment.

*Source: Arizona Star Daily*

## 5 Myths of Anti-immigration Talk Op-Ed

Let's debunk the biggest myths of the anti-immigration movement that has swept this country and may still have an impact on the 2008 presidential race: that it is not anti-Hispanic, that it doesn't oppose legal immigration and that it's against only "illegal" immigration.

Most U.S. Republican presidential hopefuls -- with the exception of Sen. John McCain -- and cable television anti-immigration crusaders on CNN and Fox News are deceiving the public with their claim that they are only against "illegal" immigration.

- Myth No. 1: "We are only against illegal immigration. Undocumented immigrants should get in line for visas." That's deceptive because you can't demand that people get into line when, for the most part, there is no line to get into.

- Myth No. 2: "Anti-immigration advocates are not anti-Hispanic." Maybe many aren't but when was the last time you heard anti-immigration Republican hopefuls or cable television talk show hosts lashing out against illegal immigrants from Canada?

- Myth No. 3: "We are a nation of laws, and the law says you have to enter the country legally." Yes, but we are also a nation of immigrants. And, by the way, nearly half of all undocumented immigrants enter the country legally, and overstay their visas.

- Myth No. 4: "Building a border fence will solve the problem." Wrong. As long as the per capita income in the United States is five times bigger than that of Mexico, and as long as U.S. labor market demands millions of low-skilled jobs that Americans won't fill, people will jump over the fence, dig tunnels under it or come through Canada.

- Myth No. 5: Those of us who criticize anti-immigration groups are "amnesty" and "open borders" supporters. Baloney. Many support both border protection and an earned path to legalization for millions of undocumented workers who pay taxes and are willing to learn English.

For the entire article, go to:  
[http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/columnists/guests/s\\_548344.html](http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/opinion/columnists/guests/s_548344.html)

*Source: Pittsburgh Tribune Review*

## Application Logjam May Take Years To Unblock

The director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service said yesterday (Jan 18) that it will take the federal government three years to clear a huge surge of citizenship applications filed last summer and return processing times to a six-month standard.

USCIS received 3 million applications for naturalization, green cards and other immigration benefits last summer, compared with 1.8 million in 2006. Officials attributed the influx to immigrants seeking to

apply before a well-publicized fee increase took effect July 30, concern over the harsh tone of the nation's debate over illegal immigration and interest in the 2008 elections.

As a result, USCIS announced it will take 18 months to process applications filed after June 1, 2007, up from about seven months.

Rep. Zoe Lofgren (D-Calif.), chairman of the immigration subcommittee, said in an interview that she believes that Gonzalez "cares about this, but I also think that timeline is unacceptable. This was an entirely foreseeable surge. . . . We're going to do our best to get them the resources they need to properly process applications."

*Source: Washington Post*

In response to the delays in Naturalization, the **Irish Apostolate USA**, **Irish Lobby for Immigration Reform**, **Chicago Irish Immigrant Support**, along with many other faith-based and immigrant organizations and concerned individuals sent the following letter to Emilio Gonzalez, Director, USCIS recently:

*The undersigned organizations are writing to you because we are deeply concerned about the current delays in naturalization processing.*

*The delays stem from last summer's surge in applications for citizenship and other immigration benefits. Immigrants had already begun applying for citizenship in much higher numbers throughout 2006, moved by a desire to become full members of our body politic and commit to their new home country. The fee increases announced in early 2007 provided even more motivation for these immigrants to not delay their applications any further.*

*Many of the undersigned organizations opposed fee increases of the magnitude that USCIS proposed and warned that if USCIS were to proceed with the fee increases, it must prepare for a surge in applications from immigrants wishing to avoid the fee increases. In fact,*

*USCIS did move forward with the fee increases, but did not adequately prepare to handle such a surge.*

### **Adman to Pitch Immigrants' Story**

The nation's heated debate over immigration is headed to television advertising, in the form of a business-funded campaign that will tout the benefits of legalizing illegal workers and try to counter hardening rhetoric on immigration.

The campaign is spearheaded by Lionel Sosa, a media strategist who is credited with delivering nearly half of the Hispanic vote to President Bush in the previous presidential race.

Yesterday (Jan 16), Mr. Sosa gathered here (Las Vegas) representatives from the construction, lodging, agricultural and banking sectors, as well as from churches, grass-roots groups and both political parties, to review the ads and finalize their strategy.

For the entire article, go to:  
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120044903286993077.html>

### **What Drives the Immigration Backlash (Beyond Immigration)**

The rising backlash against illegal immigrants has deeper roots than the economic impact of immigration, says John B. Judis in **the New Republic**. It reflects a broader anxiety over the health of the U.S. and the impact of globalization.

In states like Iowa and South Carolina, voters' concerns do reflect a sudden and recent rise in the immigrant population. But strong anti-immigrant backlashes are also occurring in states where immigrants are scarce. In New Hampshire, for example, exit polls from the primary showed that 25% of Republican and independent voters considered immigration the most important issue the country faces. Yet the state ranks 42nd when it comes to

the number of illegal immigrants living there, according to the Pew Hispanic Center, and only 2.2% of New Hampshire residents are Hispanic.

In such states, immigrants have become the scapegoats for the economic anxieties brought by globalization. Those who feel the strongest about immigration are generally workers from the lower-middle class without technical qualifications — those whose livelihoods are most at risk from outsourcing, says Mr. Judis. A poll last year found that the statement “immigrants take more from our country than they give” garnered the most support among men between the ages of 30 and 39 without a college degree.

Along with economic grievances, the movement against immigrants also reflects “a loss of confidence in the cohesion and resilience of the American nation,” says Mr. Judis. Polls show a rising number of people think the U.S. is headed in the wrong direction and that sense of decline makes the backlash against immigrants even stronger, says Mr. Judis. The fear is that immigrants will undermine national unity just when it is needed most. Colorado Representative Tom Tancredo frequently cites those fears in his campaign for tougher immigration laws, saying immigration is “the issue of our culture itself, and whether we will survive.”

*Source: Wall Street Journal*

### **O'Hare gets Device to take all 10 Fingerprints of Foreign Visitors to Chicago**

Stepped-up security measures are in effect for foreign travelers arriving at O'Hare International Airport, after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently introduced a new ID system requiring visitors to be fully fingerprinted before they can enter the country.

Under the new system, foreigners going through U.S. Customs booths at O'Hare must give digital prints of all 10 fingers and take a photo for a growing

Homeland Security database of information on visitors to the U.S.

O'Hare is only the fourth airport in the U.S. to receive the new scanning equipment and software, joining Washington's Dulles airport, Boston's Logan airport, and Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson airport. DHS plans to expand the program's reach to all points of entry across the U.S. by the end of the year.

## **NEWS FROM IRELAND**

### **Remarks from Bishop Seamus Hegarty**

#### **Chairman, Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants**



In a recent letter sent to the Irish Apostolate USA, Bishop Seamus Hegarty expressed his thanks to the members of IAUSA:

*I am hoping that I will be able to visit in 2008 to acknowledge the good work which all of you are doing and to do whatever I can to support all of you. .... Please convey my warmest personal and seasonal greetings to all who are engaged in the important work of “walking with our emigrants.” I accompany my greetings with my blessings on your work.*

Your comments regarding this newsletter are welcome. Please fax or email any information you would like included in this newsletter to:

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