

Farewell Wishes to Fr. Alan Hilliard

As I mentioned in last month's IAUSA newsletter, Fr. Alan Hilliard is leaving his position as Director of the Irish Episcopal Commission for Emigrants at the end of November. He will be on sabbatical for several months next year doing research and writing on migration issues before he begins his next assignment. All of us involved with the Irish Apostolate USA have appreciated Alan's leadership, friendship and commitment to providing services to Irish immigrants in the USA. The following wishes are sent to Alan by the various Apostolate Centers.

Alan,

Thank you Fr Alan for the great leadership in supporting our Irish Immigrants and our Pastoral Centers in the United States. Your vision, energy and enthusiasm have inspired all of us who work with immigrants. Thank you so much. I hope you can visit with us during your well earned break. On behalf of all the members of Irish Apostolate, good luck in your next appointment. Slan agus beannacht.

Fr. Brendan McBride, President, IAUSA
San Francisco IIPC

I know Alan wouldn't appreciate a eulogy whilst he's still vertical and running around but I, like many others, have greatly benefited from his counsel and energy on the front lines of emigrant advice services. We will miss that. But even in his sabbatical year, when others might go bungee-jumping or finding themselves in some contemplative space, it is heartening to know that Alan will be doing some much needed research on migrant issues and policy.

Alan has the great ability to straddle the worlds of compassion for migrants, be they Irish or otherwise, practical policy making, forward thinking and the

sharp elbowing and hurly-burly of local and national politics. And he does it all with style and aplomb.

I am grateful and lucky to have worked with him over the last several years and Thank God I still have his mobile number!

Bart Murphy, president, Coalition of Irish Immigration Centers, 2004-2007

Dear Alan,

We, at Ocean City Irish Student Outreach, wish you much success in whatever endeavor to which you are next assigned. I, along with my colleagues, thank you for your support and your genuine interest in our efforts to look after the Irish students visiting Ocean City and the surrounding area. Your visit here two years ago was much appreciated by myself and the Irish community. I feel fortunate to have had your friendship and you will be missed here and throughout Irish Apostolate USA. God Bless.

Bill Ferguson – Ocean City

Dear Alan,

I want to convey my thanks to you for your untiring energy and your amazing help to Irish Outreach San Diego during some stressful times. I am happy to say that your input in our organization was greatly appreciated. We wish you well in your new work as we keep you in our prayers.

God Bless,

Bernadette Cashman – San Diego

Dear Alan,

Thank you so much for your letter full of good information and news. You truly deserve a sabbatical! We will always remember your genuine and inspiring dedication to your work and your friendship. Thank you for all you put into the past seven years! Hard to believe it's been seven years! Despite the lack of new immigration reform, we will carry on the focus and hopes for good news! Best wishes in your new assignment and in your travels. I hope, and feel sure, our paths will cross again. Very best wishes,
Patricia O'Callaghan - Project Irish Outreach, NY

Dear Alan,

On behalf of all at Chicago Irish Immigrant support, I take this opportunity to say how genuinely sorry we are to see Alan Hilliard moving on. Alan has been a true leader in helping us provide a better service to all who come to our centers seeking help. His untiring support for the undocumented Irish in the US both here and in Ireland will be sorely missed.

We will miss his skills as a doer and his genuine friendship and good humor at all times. It was indeed a pleasure to work with him. We wish him well and pray that he has a fruitful time on what is truly a well earned sabbatical. Regards, Michael Leonard - Chicago Irish Immigrant Support

Alan,

Best of luck to you with all new endeavours. Many thanks for your input - please stay in touch!

Siobhan Dennehy - Emerald Isle Immigration Center

Dear Alan,

I send best wishes to you as you move on, your presence among us over these past several years has been a special gift. Thanks so much for all of your work for us and for your encouragement and support. You will be missed very much. If you are ever in New York, you are always welcome to visit. May God bless you and strengthen you in the days ahead. Peace, prayers and blessings to you.

Sr. Christine Hennessy - Project Irish Outreach, NY

JFI Campaign Update

AgJOBS Legislation not offered to Farm Bill

After much discussion and consultation, Senator Dianne Feinstein chose not to offer S. 340, the Agricultural Jobs, Opportunity, Benefits, and Security Act of 2007 (AgJOBS) to the Farm bill, which is still being considered by the U.S. Senate. Senator Feinstein decided not to offer the AgJOBS amendment when some supporters indicated that they would not vote for the legislation as an amendment to the Farm bill, including Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee and floor manager of the Farm bill. In a statement, Senator Feinstein indicated that she would look for other opportunities to offer AgJOBS on the Senate floor, either prior to adjournment in December or sometime next year.

Enforcement-only bills introduced

Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) has introduced **H.R. 4056**, the Border Enforcement, Employment Verification, and Illegal Immigration Control Act, enforcement-only legislation similar to H.R. 4437, legislation introduced in 2005 and opposed by the USCCB and immigrant rights groups.

On the Democratic side, Representative Heath Shuler (D-NC) also has introduced an enforcement-only bill, **H.R. 4088**, the Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement (**SAVE**) Act. Senator Mark Pryor (D-ARK) and Mary Landrieu (D-La.) have introduced the legislation in the U.S. Senate. It would expand a worker verification program for employers, expand border security measures, and authorize funds for state and local law enforcement. It currently has 112 co-sponsors. Because Rep. Shuler is a Democrat, it is important that you contact him and co-sponsors of his legislation and object to an enforcement-only approach to immigration reform.

Congress could address immigration before end of year

Congress will return to Washington, D.C., December 3rd and will need to decide whether to enact an omnibus appropriations bill to fund the government's functions for Fiscal Year 2008 or to extend a continuing budget resolution at current levels until next year. There may be attempts by business interests to enact in any budget agreement extensions of the H-2B visa program, for low-skilled workers and the H1-B program, the visa program for high-tech workers. [USCCB will oppose these attempts unless the AgJOBS legislation and the DREAM Act are also added to the package. Stay tuned for further developments in this area.](#)

National Migration Conference to be Held in D.C. July 28-31, 2008

Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. will co-sponsor the National Migration Conference *July 28-31, 2008, in Washington, D.C.* The

conference will feature national speakers and an Advocacy Day on Capitol Hill. JFI trainings will also be included. For more information on the conference, go to:
www.nationalimmigrationconference.org

Model Materials

The Maryland Catholic Conference has produced immigration materials you might find of interest. They can be found at www.mdathcon.org and click on the header, "Where All Find a Home: A Catholic Response to Immigration."

Immigrants Pull Weight in Economy, Study Finds

Immigrants contribute nearly one-fourth of the economic output of New York, and outside of New York City, they are overrepresented in some of the most critical occupations, including higher education and health care, according to a study to be released today. For the entire article, go to:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/26/nyregion/26report.html?ex=1196744400&en=8e4aeafd677ecda6&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

Source: *New York Times*

Christian Faith Leaders Call for Understanding on Immigration before Thanksgiving Holiday

Press Conference – Nov 14 – Washington, DC

Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CCIR) hosted a press conference where **Rev. Jim Wallis**, Founder and CEO of Sojourners, **Most Reverend John Wester**, Bishop of Salt Lake City, Chairman, USCCB Committee on Migration, **Rev. Samuel Rodriguez**, President of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference and **James Winkler**, General Secretary of the United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society, urged Christians across the country and people of good will to remember the place of immigrants in our country and in our history as people of faith. CCIR is engaging faith leaders in an effort to reframe the immigration debate with a stronger moral imperative. Speakers will call on

Christians to reject hate speech aimed at immigrants and to remember the scriptural call to "welcome the stranger among us," a stranger, who in fact may be our neighbor or our fellow church member. As Thanksgiving approaches, participants will urge Americans to recall both the blessings in their lives and the needs of "the least of these" in our nation, many of whom are undocumented immigrants working for a better life.

At the press conference, Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, a coalition of Christian organizations, churches, and leaders from across the theological and political spectrum, united in support of responsible immigration reform, released a report "**A House Divided: Why Americans of Faith Are Concerned About Undocumented Immigrants.**" This report documents the increasing prevalence of the un-Christian treatment of immigrants. It focuses on three areas of humanitarian concern for the faith community, including the increases in hate speech and hate groups linked to the anti-immigrant movement, the upswing of harshly anti-immigrant local and state ordinances and the impact of raids on immigrant families living in our country's shadows.

Some of the report findings include:

- That the tenor of the national debate over immigration is being set by organizations deeply rooted in hate, with the key national groups advocating against immigrant rights having received funding from a pro-eugenics foundation;
- That the consequences of this hateful debate are being felt not only in the Congress, but at a state and local level, and communities are being ripped apart;
- Our Christian and American values of compassion and human dignity are endangered as immigrant families are ripped apart and individual undocumented immigrants are treated as less than human; and
- The religious community is uniquely positioned to serve as a bridge across our differences on immigration and a source of healing and reconciliation. We as Christians are pledging to do more to unite our communities and restore the fabric of

our society that this growing hate threatens to tear apart.

Statement of Most Reverend John Wester

Chair, USCCB Committee on Migration
Press Conference – Washington – 11/14/07

I am happy to be here with other religious leaders to give my thoughts and the thoughts of the U.S. bishops on the current state of the national immigration debate.

The U.S. bishops are disturbed by the rhetoric and vitriol that has permeated the public discourse on the issue of immigration. Since the failure of the immigration reform bill in June, verbal attacks on immigrants have increased, creating an atmosphere of fear in immigrant communities.

Some talk radio and cable television shows have helped contribute to this poisoned atmosphere of division. Sadly, some of our elected officials and presidential candidates have jumped on the bandwagon, viewing the issue of immigration as a means to gain votes at the ballot box, not as a human problem to be addressed.

To compound matters, the failure of Congress to fix our broken immigration system in a humane way has led to a patchwork of state and local immigration enforcement initiatives across the nation. These incongruent state laws and local ordinances have the effect of driving undocumented immigrants further into the shadows or to other areas of the country. They have pitted communities, cities, and states against each other. And in some cases, they have created unrest and conflict in localities.

It is time for our country to stop demonizing undocumented immigrants and work toward a solution to the problem of illegal immigration. It is clear to us that immigrants provide valuable work in important industries and that our economy needs their labor. It is also clear that there are those who would rather these persons work in the shadows, without rights or the protection of the law.

As a nation, we cannot have it both ways. We cannot accept the toil of immigrants in the service, construction, and agricultural industries

while relegating them to a permanent underclass without rights and subject to abuse, exploitation, and even death. The issue of immigration is not simply an economic or social issue, but it is also a humanitarian one which impacts the human rights and dignity of the person.

On behalf of the U.S. Catholic bishops, I urge our elected officials on the federal, state, and local levels to halt enforcement-only initiatives and return to a constructive dialogue on the enactment of comprehensive immigration reform. I urge candidates for office and elected officials to demonstrate leadership and to educate their constituents about the realities of immigration. I finally urge all Americans, especially Catholics, to resist hatred and work together toward a humane solution to our immigration crisis.

Archbishop Beltran Leads Resistance to Oklahoma Immigration Law

A new state immigration bill took effect November 1 in Oklahoma and in response, the Most Reverend Eusebius Beltran and several priests in the Catholic Archdiocese of Oklahoma City sent a pledge of resistance to Oklahoma Governor Henry. The pledge reads in part: *"Because this law is overly punitive and makes a felony of the act of providing humanitarian assistance to an undocumented person in need; we the undersigned clergy, religious leaders, and lay people of conscience will not and can not obey this law. We will continue to aid and assist all people regardless of their legal citizenship status, with charitable care and spiritual counsel. We people of faith and conscience refuse to be defined by fear of Oklahoma's law which makes servant-leaders felons. Rather we stand in obedience to faith, hope, and love. We call for repeal of this anti-immigrant bill and for the passage of immigration reform that provides justice for all of God's children. We stand together, in solidarity, in defiance of this law because of our allegiance to a higher law; the law of love of God and humanity."*

Guidelines to Humanize Immigration Raids

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has formally adopted federal guidelines aimed at softening treatment of illegal

immigrants arrested in work-site raids who are pregnant, nursing infants or serving as sole caregivers to children or seriously ill relatives.

The entire article can be found at:
<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-immig24nov24,0,3495257.story?coll=la-home-center>

Source: LA Times

Iowa Interfaith Coalition Hopes to Get 10,000 Signatures

The Iowa Interfaith Alliance of religious and immigrant organizations is working to obtain at least 10,000 signatures for the following petition to show to each of the Presidential candidates. The goal of this grassroots effort is to show the presidential candidates that people of faith want them to take seriously the need for laws that uphold the rights and dignity of immigrants. The Interfaith Coalition in Washington, DC has assisted the Iowa group in organizing this effort.

"We pledge ourselves as people of faith and goodwill to stand with our immigrant neighbors who have come to the United States from throughout the world. Recognizing the moral imperative to welcome the stranger in our midst, we commit ourselves to support laws that affirm their dignity, preserve their families, and acknowledge the value of their presence among us."

Coping with reality

Eight states allow undocumented immigrants to receive their drivers' licenses or permits: Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, and Washington

Ten states have passed legislation that allows illegal residents to receive in-state tuition rates at public universities: California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington

Policy Defines Trooper Role on Immigration

A new Massachusetts policy makes it clear that State Troopers should not enforce

federal immigration laws, but troopers may ask a person's immigration status during traffic stops and other matters if it is relevant to a criminal investigation.

For the entire article, go to:
http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/11/24/policy_defines_trooper_role_on_immigration?p1=email_to_a_friend

Source: Boston Globe

S.F. Supervisors Approve ID Cards for Residents

The Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday (11/13) to issue municipal identification cards to city residents - regardless of whether they are in the country legally - and to double the amount of public money available to candidates running for supervisor.

The legislation would require companies holding city contracts to accept the municipal card as a legitimate form of identification - except in cases where other state and federal laws require other forms of proof of age, name and residence.

Under San Francisco's sanctuary ordinance, it is city policy that no municipal government personnel or resources be used to assist federal immigration officials in the arrest and deportation of illegal immigrants.

The ID legislation, which was approved 10-1 on the first of two readings, has the support of Mayor Gavin Newsom and would make San Francisco the largest city in the country to issue municipal identification. The city of New Haven, Conn., began issuing cards earlier this year.

Source: San Francisco Chronicle

Strangers No More... An Evening of Reflection, Education and Dialogue on Immigration

On November 27 the **San Francisco Irish Immigration Pastoral Center**, the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, the Ignatian Solidarity Network, and St. John of God Parish sponsored this opportunity for reflection and dialogue on immigration issues. Celine Kennelly and one of the Irish immigrants were among the presenters.

The Citizenship Surge

About the only point of agreement on immigration in this country is that newcomers who play by the rules — fill out their forms, pay their fees and wait their turn — are welcome. But that great American dogma is being sorely tested by the inability of the federal government's feeble citizenship agency to deal with a flood of applications that arose this summer.

The agency, Citizenship and Immigration Services, is telling legal immigrants that applications for citizenship and for residence visas filed after June 1 will take about 16 to 18 months to process. The agency was utterly unprepared for the surge, and so tens of thousands of Americans-in-waiting will have to keep on waiting. Many, gallingly, may have to sit out next November's election, even though that civic act was what prompted many of them to apply in the first place.

For the entire article, go to:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/27/opinion/27tue1.html?ex=1196830800&en=9d29081c9cf58357&ei=5070&emc=eta1>

Source: New York Times

Gaeltacht affairs Michael Ring said the Taoiseach should visit the United States to lobby on the issue, and also seek the support of the Rev. Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness.

The State had a responsibility not to turn its back on the people forced to leave during darker economic times, he added.

"The situation facing undocumented Irish in the US has become more precarious since 9/11, with many of them unable to obtain driving licences, travel to or from Ireland, even at the most upsetting times when they need to attend a family funeral." There were reports of Irish people being targeted, arrested and deported. Six undocumented Irish, one woman and five men, had been arrested in the past few weeks, said Mr Ring.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Michael Kitt said "The Government has consistently made it clear that if efforts to pass comprehensive reform legislation were unsuccessful, we would explore all possible alternative options. These options include a bilateral solution."

Source: Irish Times

NEWS FROM IRELAND

EK writes EK

EK writes EK With all party agreement on the issue of a bilateral visa treaty with the United States nailed down in the Dáil recently, Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny has struck out on a solo mission seeking help in the matter from Senator Edward Kennedy. To read the article, go to:

<http://www.irishecho.com/newspaper/story.cfm?id=18565>

TDs Unite to Seek Special Deal for Irish in US

The Dáil united last night in calling for a bilateral agreement to legalise undocumented Irish in the United States. The Government accepted a Fine Gael motion, demanding action on the matter, and agreed to a joint motion.

Welcoming the Government's move, Fine Gael spokesman on community, rural and

Chairman Alan Hilliard's Address to ÉAN

Annual General Meeting - December 1, 2007

Excerpts

Keeping in Touch

Today many nations are waking up to the political and monetary power of their Diaspora. More and more they wish to cultivate strategic relationship with their people living abroad. Some wish to stay in touch with their Diaspora in order to entice their best people back to their homeland. Reversing the brain drain is a key policy now for many countries. If Ireland is to be a leader in this area we have a lot more work to do. We have allowed circumstance to attract people back rather than actively strategise the involvement of people in their homeland.

Taking Second Place

None of us want to revert back to the days of unemployment; days when 'The town I loved so well' saw men who walked the dogs and women sought out the few jobs that were available. However we cannot say that human well being

lies solely with a job. Human well being has many indicators; having a job is one of them. Those among the undocumented population in the US have jobs, yet the insecurity that they face at a daily level tears at their sense of well-being. The lack of a positive political outcome for the undocumented in the United States is a disappointment to all of us involved in the care of Irish emigrants and is only a shadow of the disappointment felt by those that are still living furtive lives and try to keep hope alive. We have focused on the issue of immigration reform when maybe we should study the issue from a different angle, namely, reform of the labour market. These people are working at jobs that contribute to the Gross National Product of the US. The vast majority pay taxes. They are employed by American citizens who face a labour market shortage and a resulting loss of revenue should this supply of labour dry up. They employ these people, benefiting from their work, yet they fail in their responsibilities to them.

Maybe we need not work the corridors of power in the US but engage in a campaign to educate people about the reality of our undocumented Irish in the United States. Time can be spent arguing or time can be used more productively educating those that are in need of education and enlightened programs that dispel myths. You cannot change political process and outcomes if you ignore that mindset of those who actually vote.

Unit for the Irish Abroad

All involved in emigrant services have benefited greatly over the last number of years since the establishment of the Irish Abroad Unit and the subsequent increase in Government funding. This has meant increased (though not total security) for those that are served and increased security for those who provide the services.

Forum for Discussion

'There's gold in them thar hills', brings attention to the fear that the Unit for the Irish Abroad might be reduced to a mere a bank teller with a purely monetary role doling out money for anything 'Oirish' that coincides with visits of dignitaries or supporting some nice ideas that may have a business interest lurking in the background. Brian Harvey's welcome attention to the report may help us make the appropriate

enlightened response to the Goodbody report. This report indicates that we need to focus on value for money. However, it must never forget the emigrants that are in difficult circumstances. Finding people in need is an ongoing challenge. Those that are most isolated and vulnerable in order to provide culturally sensitive support and care are proving a difficult challenge, yet it is the desire of the Irish taxpayer that we use every effort to find these and support them.

ÉAN's Contribution

ÉAN's support for rights and benefits for emigrants have served as sensitive foundation for those who come to our country. Issues that have been ignored are now faced by those who arrive here; for instance the lack of clarity around the recognition of overseas qualifications still torments many who wish to return. Other countries have developed mechanisms to support the recognition of qualifications. In short, if the will is there it can happen. Other issues like the need to put in place a path to citizenship for people who devote a large part of their life to the economic well being of a nation is essential for social cohesion. The importance of ethnic radio and television cannot be underestimated for people that are trying to find their feet in a new land. The work of ÉAN in assisting centres abroad as they set up good local networking agencies has been an important focus and aids greater communications between groups here in Ireland and abroad. The support and establishment of reliable and dependable groups that represent their people abroad where they settle is another important factor that aids integration.

Conclusion

I thank Noreen and the Board for not sitting back and for getting on with the task of allowing ÉAN to mature to the point where it is making a profound impact on Irish life and is giving great service to Irish emigrants.

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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