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Why Immigrants Come

Paul Apostolidis

On May 1, 2006, immigrants and their allies staged historic work stoppages and marches for justice across the United States and abroad. That day, I took the Whitman College students in my course on “Politics and Religion” to the main park in Walla Walla, Washington, where our college is located. As Mexican American teenagers shouted hip-hop riffs into a microphone, families spread out a pot-luck lunch, and Community College students held break-out sessions on immigration reform, my students and I discussed contemporary Christian perspectives on immigration. We looked closely at two documents: the 2003 joint statement on migration by the U.S. and Mexican Catholic bishops, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” and a recent speech by Dr. Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention.

While the bishops’ letter

why immigrants make the long, arduous, trek to the United States. Land’s focus was all on “us”: *our* security, *our* rights, *our* laws, *our* jobs. These concerns are not to be lightly dismissed. But what about the lives of immigrants—their rights, their families’ needs, their



capacities and hopes for work, their languages and cultures? How does our perspective on justice change and grow when we try to understand what immigration is all about by listening to the voices of

and Guatemalan food-processing workers in the U.S. West who had made extraordinary efforts to revitalize their unions and to challenge hazardous conditions in their workplaces. I wanted to find out why they relocated to the U.S. How might knowing more about

their experiences as immigrants help explain why they had so boldly taken action in the face of mammoth corporations like Tyson Foods and Cargill? And how could attending to their stories help shift the conversation about immigration from a pre-occupation with how or whether immigrants can *assimilate* to *our* national

culture toward appreciating how immigrants can help *radically transform* our undemocratic and unequal society?

Most of the workers I talked to came from genuinely poor families in Mexico: families who missed out on the general economic uplift Mexico experienced during its postwar expansion; families who, when economic catastrophe hit in the early 1980s, were forced to shut down their small businesses and earn wages in large garment factories and tourist hotels. These families watched the local populations in their rural villages steadily drain away as agricultural

How does our perspective on justice change and grow when we try to understand what immigration is all about by listening to the voices of immigrants themselves?

included lengthy segments on distressing social conditions in Latin America, Land seemed uninterested in the question of

immigrants themselves?

Several years ago, I conducted a series of interviews with immigrant Mexican, Salvadorian,

production dwindled, even before NAFTA intensified the corporate expropriation of farm land. And certainly, these immigrant workers were looking to gain the advantages they thought coming to the U.S. would enable them to have—access to better educational opportunities for their children, as well as higher incomes and wider consumer options for themselves.

The migration stories of these immigrant worker-activists also revealed, however, that for these individuals, deciding to immigrate was above all a matter of putting into practice their deep-seated

commitments to personal and interpersonal ethics. Immigration provided a series of action-contexts where, to borrow terms from labor historian Vicki Ruiz, these individuals were not merely “victims of poverty” but also showed “agency” as they “made choices for themselves and for their families.”¹ Thus, immigration became a crucible of ethical identity, for they made these choices on the basis of their core values of self-reliance and family responsibility. Once they had become established in the U.S., these ethical commitments to oneself and one’s own blossomed into more

inclusive forms of regard for, and joint action with, others.

Lucio and Teresa Moreno were leading activists in the 1995-2005 workers’ movement at Tyson’s plant in Pasco, Washington. Born in Jalisco, Mexico, Lucio first came to the U.S. in the 1980s, after having traveled through Mexico looking for work to support his young family. “I don’t live for free, I tell you,” said Lucio. “I pay with my sweat: to eat, to live. If I want to live well, I have to work harder. And that’s what I’m doing.... No one is giving me anything. I’m the one who’s earning it.”

Self-reliance is at the center of Moreno’s vision of what it means to live an ethical life. It is what motivated him to inspire fellow immigrant workers to unite, gathering mutual strength from their individual efforts to fight back against abusive supervisors at Tyson. He also played a key role in mustering the group solidarity that enabled the workers to carry out a major strike and to democratize the union so that it was effectively led by the immigrant rank and file. In short, Lucio Moreno came to the U.S. because he believed strongly in taking care of himself, and this same desire to prove his self-sufficiency led him to join others in an exemplary struggle for workplace democracy and human rights.

Lucio’s wife, Teresa, tells a different story, but one that once again shows the remarkable ethical agency of immigrants. After Lucio left and the family’s small store in Mérida, Yucatán, folded, Teresa moved to Cancún, leaving behind

the *comadre* who had helped take care of her kids. She then spent two hard years cleaning in the hotels and worrying about her children, who now had to take care of themselves for most of the day. Teresa made up her mind to cross the border because she wanted to be a good mother: so she could find a work situation that would let her adequately care for her children, “so they could be with their dad,” and “so that they could get an education.”

When Teresa later got involved in organizing people to change the brutal conditions at Tyson, she used family life as a model for interpreting the workers’ democratic slogan, “*¡Nosotros somos la unión!*” [We are the union!]. “It’s like a home. I could come home and just stay there sitting around all the time, like I have nothing to do. Let’s say my children are there. If I set the example of standing up to do something, they’ve all got to get up to help.” By immigrating to the United States, Teresa Moreno acted on her dedication to her family, and that dedication eventually bore additional fruit by helping her define a distinctive, “familial” approach to grassroots democracy where collective empowerment and mutual support grow out of individual responsibility.

In the 1980s when Lucio and Teresa Moreno made their separate but entwined treks north of the Rio Grande and into Washington State, another national discussion on immigration reform was

As the current immigration dispute rages, we can gain some moral clarity by considering what immigrants say about their own experiences and their reasons for immigrating.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Immigrants pay taxes—in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at the federal and state level. As far as income tax payments go, studies find that immigrants pay between \$90 and \$140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Undocumented immigrants pay income taxes as well, as evidenced by the Social Security Administration’s “suspense file” (taxes that cannot be matched to workers’ names and social security numbers), which grew by \$20 billion between 1990 and 1998.

— www.immigrationforum.org

Immigrants serve with distinction in our Armed Forces—30,000 foreign-born individuals are currently serving in the armed forces. Immigrants account for 20 percent of the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

— www.aifl.org

Stranger No Longer: Welcoming Immigrants

Leo Anchondo

Although immigration is a complex issue, it seems clear that the current system being used in the United States is broken. In examining the issues surrounding immigration policies, it is essential to keep in mind that for us, as Catholics, immigration is fundamentally a moral issue.

Throughout history, people have always been on the move, traveling from one land to the next. The Bible contains many accounts of people migrating. In the Old Testament, the journey of Moses and his people out of Egypt is one of the most memorable. And in the New Testament, the child Jesus and the Holy Family were refugees fleeing the terror of Herod to a new land of unknowns. As Jesus grew older and began His public ministry, he would travel from place to place, “with nowhere to lay His head...” (Matthew 8:20).

In addition to the numerous

look at immigration in a moral light, with open hearts and minds. The Old Testament tells us, “Do not mistreat the stranger who resides in your land. The stranger who lives among you must be treated like one of your own—for you were once strangers yourselves in Egypt.” (Leviticus 19: 32-34). In the New Testament we are told, “For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger

that end: “Then, according to the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*, the right of the family to a life worthy of human dignity is recognized. When this happens, migration attains its natural scope...”

In the encyclical, *Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)*, Pope John XXIII clearly articulates the right to migrate: “Every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of their country;

The fact that [one] is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive [one] of membership to the human family, nor of citizenship in the universal society...

and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me. I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25: 35-40)

Church teachings further emphasize that immigration is a moral issue. In the first encyclical,

Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor), Pope Leo XIII established that persons have a right to work to survive and to support their families. Pope Pius XII, in the apostolic constitution, *Exsul Familia (On the Spiritual Care of the Migrant)*,

reaffirms that migrants have a right to a life with dignity, and therefore a right to migrate toward

and, when there are just reasons for it, the right to emigrate and take up residence elsewhere.” Pope John Paul II reaffirmed this same teaching in an address to the New World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Immigrants in

1985: “When there are just reasons in favor of it, [every person] must be permitted to migrate to other countries and to take up residence there. The fact that [one] is a citizen of a particular state does not deprive [one] of membership to the human family, nor of citizenship in the universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of [all people].”

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has taken the principles from Church teachings and applied them to the immigration reality in the United States. In January, 2003, the U.S. bishops issued the pastoral letter, *Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope*. In this document, the U.S. bishops articulated five principles that govern how the Church responds to public policy proposals relating to immigration. [These five principles are outlined on the following page].



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stories of migration in the Bible, there are also many Scriptural passages that call us to

U.S. BISHOPS' 2003 PASTORAL LETTER ON IMMIGRATION—FIVE PRINCIPLES

1. Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland.

All persons have the right to find in their own countries the economic, political, and social opportunities to live in dignity and achieve a full life through the use of their God-given gifts. In this context, work that provides a just, living wage is a basic human need.

2. Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families.

The Church recognizes that all the goods of the earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right.

3. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders.

The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories but rejects such control when it is exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring additional wealth. More powerful economic nations, which have the ability to protect and feed their residents, have a stronger obligation to accommodate migration flows.

4. Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.

Those who flee wars and persecution should be protected by the global community. This requires, at a minimum, that migrants have a right to claim refugee status without incarceration and to have their claims fully considered by a competent authority.

5. The human dignity and human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

Regardless of their legal status, migrants, like all persons, possess inherent human dignity that should be respected. Often they are subject to punitive laws and harsh treatment by enforcement officers from both receiving and transit countries. Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.

Using these important principles as guidelines, the bishops analyzed the current immigration system in this country, acknowledging that it is badly in need of reform and that a comprehensive approach to fixing it is required. The bishops offer a set of recommendations for changing U.S. laws and policies to reflect the

principles contained in Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching and to bring about a more humane and just immigration system in the United States.

The bishops' call for reform includes the following elements:

- Global anti-poverty efforts
- Expanded opportunities to reunify families
- Temporary worker program
- Broad-based earned legal-

ization of undocumented persons already living in the United States

- Restoration of due process
- Acting on the evident need for a

humane, moral immigration reform, and using Catholic Social Teaching as a basis, the bishops formed the campaign, *Justice for Immigrants: A Journey of Hope*,

in May of 2005. The purpose of this campaign is to begin the process of changing hearts and minds and to educate people about the myths surrounding immigration. The goals are to encourage all people to open our arms and welcome the stranger, and to reach out to immigrants and bring

them into our communities. As Cardinal McCarrick, Archbishop Emeritus of Washington, said on March 1st of 2006, "Today, many of our brothers and sisters find themselves in their own desert—sometimes literally. They risk their lives to support their families, and they bring to our nation a strong work ethic, family values, and a deep spirituality. It is my prayer that we do not abandon them, that we embrace their many gifts, and that, in the

Government policies that respect the basic human rights of the undocumented are necessary.



very near future, their suffering will end." ~

Human Trafficking: Immigration and Exploitation Intersect

Anne Ko and Carrie Schonwald

do you know that your manicurist, the cashier at the corner store, or the busboy at your favorite restaurant may be victims of human trafficking?

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of human beings—through abduction, the use or threat of force, deception, fraud or “sale” for the purposes of sexual exploitation or forced labor.¹ Human smuggling and human trafficking

Until the poor around the planet all have access to jobs, healthcare and political freedom, there will be mass global migration.

sometimes intersect, but they are not the same. Smuggling is simply an agreement by which the smuggler illegally transports his “client” across a foreign border. If the “client” and smuggler part ways at the agreed-upon border for the agreed-upon price, then no trafficking has occurred. On the other hand, if the smuggler is in cahoots with a trafficker, and they dupe the “client” into an inescapable and exploitative labor situation, then smuggling has become trafficking.

In a village in Latin America, Africa, Asia or Europe, a poor family is coerced by an acquaintance to send their child to the United States, with all travel expenses paid, to work for a former neighbor. Once Juana, Mei, Asha, or Svetlana arrives in the U.S., she is forced into prostitution and given none of the money earned.

In addition to sexual slavery, there are more hidden faces of human trafficking—the domestic

servants, farm hands and construction workers—who have had their documents taken away by their employers and who never receive the pay they were promised. Although they may not be beaten, they are threatened daily, with consequences ranging from deportation to the murder of their families.

Victims of trafficking may be male or female, of any age. They come from many countries and educational backgrounds. Their

traffickers may be wealthy mafia kings or respectable couples living in the suburbs, holding a low-paid nanny against her will.

The sad truth is that 21% (1.1 billion people) of the global population lives on less than \$1 a day, in countries rife with sociopolitical problems and lacking in economic opportunity.² It is precisely this desperation and lack of opportunity upon which traffickers prey.

In 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Trafficking Victim’s Protection Act to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute traffickers. The services and laws springing from this act were a beginning, but much more is needed.

People of conscience need to ask some probing questions. Would it not be more economical to have fiscal policies toward the developing world that do not create an environment where people need to leave their homes for survival? Would it not be more equitable to create immigration laws that permit those who contribute to the labor force of this country to

come here by legitimate channels? Would it not be more ethical to focus our federal funds on preventing traffickers from preying on the vulnerable, rather than treating immigrants as terrorists?

Trafficking is an extraordinarily complex problem. Individually, it is one person using power to exploit another for financial gain. Systemically, it is a multifaceted, global issue based on the intersection between crime, economics, migration, labor, health and socio-cultural practices. Developing countries benefit from the cheap labor of poorer countries, while enforcing economic policies that trap these countries into crushing debt.

When we add to these economic factors the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of the United States government, desperation to come to the U.S. *by any means* becomes commonplace. Until the poor around the planet all have access to jobs, healthcare and political freedom, there will be mass global migration. Until the U.S. and other destination countries create immigration policies which reflect the realities of a global economy, and until there is adequate law enforcement to prevent criminals from finding more victims, human trafficking will continue to thrive. ~

1 Vital Voices Global Partnership www.vitalvoices.org

2 “Dramatic Decline in Global Poverty, But Progress Uneven,” April 23, 2004, www.worldbank.org

3 U.S. Department of State Trafficking In Persons Report 2003, The Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Anne Ko and Carrie Schonwald are advocates and administrators of the Anti-Human Trafficking Program of the Refugee Women’s Alliance in Seattle, WA.

Every year, between 18,000 and 20,000 foreign nationals are trafficked into the U.S. and between 600,000- 800,000 people are trafficked around the world.³



Sr. Mary Ellen Robinson, SNJM, has been a teacher, pastoral worker, and community organizer. She is now the director/staff of Marie Rose House, an educational outreach in Wapato, WA.

Cultural Contributions of Immigrants

Sr. Mary Ellen Robinson

What are some of the cultural contributions of immigrants, beyond their labor and low wages? What would we Americans lose if all our immigrants and their children left us?

In Wapato, three beautiful faith communities are celebrating their 100th anniversaries. At least one of them is dying. The most common special ceremony there is a funeral. Another is bursting at the seams, with youth, talent and potential for transformative prayer and action. The difference? New immigrants.

In Advent, our parish was accustomed to a quiet, muted lavender and green atmosphere. When the Mexican community decorated the church for the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe

enjoy the soup are preferred behavior in some parts of the world, that Catholics from most of Latin America live a deep and deeply different Catholicism than the one I grew up in.

Many of the immigrants I know are from less materialistic cultures. Some come from cultures where faith and spirituality are actively celebrated in public life, and parties are more important than deadlines. The significance and relative values of mind and heart, privacy,

shared and social are different. Goals and assumptions about “a good life,” “a good job,” and “a well-educated child” are not the same. As we US-ians choose to receive or reject new immigrants, we weigh the pros and cons. So many judgments our minds have made are cultural, not universally human. We can cling or change, open or close. But thanks to our immigrant teachers, we know we have choices.

New immigrants bring cultural gifts that both transcend and lie beneath the externals of music, food, clothing, art, etc. They bring different points of view, new life, youth, energy, experience with risk. Even before we meet the mysterious and particular

genius of one immigrant or group of immigrants, just the fact that they are *new* and *other* brings variety, which func-

tions as life-giving oxygen in our American bloodstream. ~

“Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were America.”

—Oscar Handlin, Professor Emeritus of American History, Harvard University

on December 12, we saw that our idea of Advent is not universal. Others hold very different mental and emotional maps of December. New immigrants bring ideas of beauty and celebration that both refresh and challenge.

Often, after a bilingual Mass, Anglos complain about how long it was, and Latinos wonder why it was so short! When it comes to time, and what’s important, family and community celebrations trump almost every other value for many Mexicans. Celebration and communication are processes, and they expect to invest time and money accordingly.

I cannot count the assumptions I’ve had to examine, thanks to immigrant friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. The incomprehensibility of my living alone, my wealth, the relative value of things and people in parish life, that not talking at meals and slurping if you

So many judgments our minds have made are cultural, not universally human. We can cling or change, open or close.



In 1907, all three congregations were formed from newly arriving families, mostly from northern European roots. The growing Church is still full of newly arriving families. The dying congregation reflects the dilemma almost all of Europe faces: let in new blood, or die. One congregation in Wapato decided a few years ago that they would rather die than change. And so it was. Their church stands empty and boarded up, an eyesore in the community.

Reinvoking the Ancient Law of Sanctuary

Rev. John Fife

On March 24th, 1982, Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson publicly declared the church a “Sanctuary” for refugees fleeing the death squads and wars in Central America. A movement began in North America that resulted in 567 Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish congregations protecting refugees in their sanctuaries. While we do not know how many lives were saved, we do know that the Sanctuary Movement forced the U.S. government to stop deportations of refugees to El Salvador and Guatemala, to grant work permits to refugees from these countries, and to reform the political asylum policy. All of this was not without some risk to those congregations and their leadership. Social justice and reform have never been achieved without risk and sacrifice.

Social justice and reform have never been achieved without risk and sacrifice.

After the peace accords were signed in Central America in 1992, we held a joyful worship celebration and declared that the Sanctuary Movement had ended. That decision may have been premature. There are now signs all around us that in order to be faithful in 2006, the church must once again become a “Sanctuary” to protect basic human rights. In this case, it is the right of poor people to migrate in order to find work so that their children are not hungry. This right of poverty-afflicted migrants is clearly established in the United Nations Conventions on the rights of migrants, in Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, in church history, and in the

Social Teaching of the Church.

Is the tradition and teaching of sanctuary appropriate for the plight of the migrant worker in our midst? This summer, the Abingdon United Methodist Church in Chicago declared their church a sanctuary for a mother from Mexico threatened with deportation. Her eight year old son is a U.S. citizen, born in Chicago. The congregation has provided them sanctuary in order to keep this family together. So far, the government has not taken any action against the family or the church.

In communities across the country, migrant workers are under threat of detention and deportation. Migrants captured in the workplace or fields are deported expeditiously, leaving families and children alone and without support. The House of Representatives passed legislation this year making it a felony to provide humanitarian aid to undocumented workers.

In the midst of this climate of fear, bigotry, and repression, Cardinal Mahony of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles has spoken a clear and prophetic word to the Church, encouraging us that to be faithful to Scripture and Church teaching, we must continue to provide ministries of compassion and humanitarian aid to migrants. Father Dan Groody of the University of Notre Dame has taught that the Parable of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25 is an exact description of the migrant in North America today.

“I was hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, an alien, in prison... And as

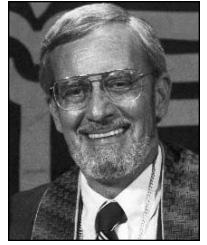
you did it unto the least of these... You did it unto Me.”

Back at Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, we have been uniting with churches and synagogues in the borderlands to save the lives of migrants in the desert. Volunteers provide water stations; doctors and nurses drive ranch roads in jeeps searching for migrants in distress; students hike migrant trails with backpacks filled with food, water, and medical aid. A center for day laborers has been established on church property so that workers can have a safe place to gather.

And we continue to ask the question, “Is the tradition of the church as sanctuary appropriate for the suffering of the migrant in our midst?” Perhaps the Spirit is on the move again, as the Rev. David Chevrier proclaimed 25 years ago. “This is the time and we are the people to reinvocate the ancient law of sanctuary... to claim our sacred right to invoke the name of God—to push back all the powers of violation and violence in the name of the Spirit to whom we owe



our ultimate allegiance. We are the people to tell Caesar, ‘No trespassing, for the ground upon which you walk is holy.’ ~



Rev. John Fife, co-founder of the Sanctuary Movement, served as Pastor of Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, AZ for 35 years.

The following three stories illustrate common experiences faced by immigrants to the U.S. The names and details of each story have been altered to protect privacy.

Terra Nevitt is the Immigration Program Manager and Staff Attorney for the Refugee Assistance Program of the Archdiocesan Housing Authority in Seattle, WA.

A Family Divided

Terra Nevitt

Mr. Sarbaz made his first trip to the United States in 1957 after completing the military academy in Afghanistan—he had been selected to go to the U.S. for a year of training. During the 1980s, he fought against communism and for the freedom of his country. But when civil war took hold of his country, he fled to Pakistan with his family.

In Pakistan, the Sarbaz family made a refugee camp their home—except for one son and his wife, who were missing in Afghanistan. Conditions in the camp were difficult and Mrs. Sarbaz

died there. In 1992 Mr. Sarbaz was granted refugee status, along with his three youngest children. The rest of the family was not allowed to travel with him. In 1993, Mr. Sarbaz entered the U.S. with his youngest son, leaving his two young daughters behind to care for his grandson, Zalmay, whose parents were still missing.

Mr. Sarbaz worked fervently to reunite his family, contacting refugee groups and members of Congress. In 1998, he was able to bring Zalmay and his two youngest daughters to the U.S. as refugees. To date, Mr. Sarbaz, who is now a U.S. citizen, has been unable to help his adult children acquire refugee status. His remaining option is to file a petition to bring

them as immigrants. He is disheartened by his knowledge that it can take eight years for a U.S. citizen to bring a married child into the country.

Mr. Sarbaz and his family are doing well. His children finished high school and are now married, with their own families. Zalmay is attending community college classes as a high school student and dreams of being a lawyer. But Mr. Sarbaz worries every day for the safety of those left behind. He often wakes at midnight to amble around the yard, wondering what might happen to them in the future. ~



The Struggles of the Undocumented

Jean Anton

Guadalupe carries the burden of being an undocumented person wherever she goes. Looking for work was a struggle, as she was repeatedly told, “You cannot apply for this job, not unless you have papers.” She confided in a friend, “I feel so miserable and desperate and sad, because everyone needs work.”

Finally, Guadalupe was able to find a low-paying job cleaning tables in the food court of one of the local malls. But she soon discovered that her status made her vulnerable. “I have to put up with the humiliation of being denied any benefits, never having a raise or a

vacation, no paid holidays, working long hours without overtime pay.” Her best friend, also undocumented, is employed as a maid at one of the downtown hotels and, even after several years on the job, is still making minimum wage.

Without benefits from her job, Guadalupe has no medical or dental insurance for herself or her children. When her 4 year-old daughter had a painful toothache, she took her to a

dental clinic at 6:30 in the morning, waiting in line for an hour before the doors opened, only to discover she had to sign up and wait another 2 hours. Eventually, she was told that the clinic could

only serve 2 patients that day, and she would have to return again later in the week.

Guadalupe has dreams that her children will get more schooling than she had in Mexico, but she knows that their undocumented status will be a barrier to higher education. She is deeply saddened as she faces broken dreams of a better future for them.

The constant fear of deportation, the vulnerability to rape and sexual harassment, reluctance to purchase a house, never feeling free, safe, part of society...these are the experiences Guadalupe lives on a daily basis. “It is so hard to get here,” she says, “I owe so much money to the smugglers who brought us across. We wouldn’t come if we didn’t have to.” ~

[Guadalupe] knows that her children’s undocumented status will be a barrier to higher education.

Jean Anton is Editor of *A Matter of Spirit*. Story from Adelante Mujeres, an education and empowerment program for low-income Latina women in Forest Grove, OR.

Land of Dreams

Kari Ansari

I came to this mid-western city in early 2001 when my husband won the green card lottery. Since then he has been driving a taxi. He wanted a career in marketing; my husband is well educated, but hasn't been hired. After sending out dozens of resumes, he has landed only one interview. It seems if your name is Mohammed and you have a foreign degree, it's difficult to find professional positions. My husband will not change his beloved name, even if he must drive a cab for the rest

Do Americans think that all Muslims are terrorists?

of his life.

As a modestly dressed Muslim woman, I also have had a hard time finding work. I have interviewed for executive assistant positions, for which I am well-qualified, but when I appear in my "hijab" (head scarf), the interviews quickly end. One man said, "I'd like to hire you, but you'll have to take that thing off your head; you'll scare my clients." I work in a Muslim-owned shop for minimum wage so I can wear my *hijab*.

Many times when I turn on the television or radio, I hear the

words "Islamic terrorist" and I wonder, do Americans think that all Muslims are terrorists? Maybe it's my imagination, but I'm beginning to feel as though everyone is suspicious of me, and it has begun to change the way I feel about myself.

Often I think I'd like to go back to my country, but after struggling for five years, it's too late. We only want to work hard and settle down.

I grew up believing that America was a land of dreams, but at times it feels like a nightmare. My peaceful faith had nothing to do with 9/11; however, because of 9/11, I think America wants nothing to do with me. ~

Kari Ansari is the Editor-in-Chief of *America's Muslim Family Magazine*, and lives with her husband and children in Herndon, VA. Website: www.americasmuslimfamily.com

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underway. That debate resulted in legislation that gave immediate legal status to the Morenos and virtually all their fellow activists at Tyson in Pasco. This legalization program, however, was only tem-

porary; since then, the numbers of undocumented immigrants have risen to even greater levels than they had reached in 1986. As the current immigration dispute rages, we can gain some moral clarity by considering what immigrants

say about their own experiences and their reasons for immigrating. We should also take note of how things ultimately turned out for the immigrants who benefited from the last major legalization initiative, and be open to seeing how beyond merely "adjusting" to U.S. society, immigrants can provide hope and ethical fortitude for re-making this society as a more humane community. ~

1 Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 34-35.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF BIRTH FOR LEGAL IMMIGRANTS: 1960 AND 2005					
1960			2005		
Country	Immigrants	Percent	Country	Immigrants	Percent
Mexico	32,684	12.3	Mexico	161,445	14.4
Germany	31,768	12	India	84,681	7.5
Canada	30,990	11.7	China	69,967	6.2
United Kingdom	24,643	9.3	Philippines	60,748	5.4
Italy	14,933	5.6	Cuba	36,261	3.2
Cuba	8,283	3.1	Vietnam	32,784	2.9
Poland	7,949	3.0	Dominican Republic	27,504	2.5
Ireland	7,687	2.9	Korea	26,562	2.4
Hungary	7,257	2.7	Colombia	25,571	2.3
Portugal	6,968	2.6	Ukraine	22,761	2.0
All Others	92,236	34.8	All Other	574,089	51.1
Total	265,398	100.00	Total	1,122,373	100.00

Source: *INS Annual Report (1960)* and *U.S. Department of Homeland Security (2005)*



intercommunity

Parenting for Peace & Justice

The Parenting for Peace & Justice program is in its second season. **Consider starting the program** in your church or community with IPJC's support. The detailed five session program includes:



- 1st—Peace in the Family
- 2nd—Simple Living as a Family
- 3rd—Families that Care for the Environment
- 4th—Nurturing Respect for Diversity
- 5th—Living in a Global World

United Way

Designate the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center with United Way. Please consider writing us in on your pledge. This is one more important way for us to receive support for doing the work of peace and justice that is so needed in our world.



Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI) Annual Report

Our 2006 NWCRI Annual Report is now available at <http://www.ipjc.org/programs/NWCRIReport2006.pdf>. We encourage you to read the report and consider how you can partner with us by praying for the justice issues we address, writing corporations about your concerns, and being a responsible consumer. If you have investments, monitor them; talk with your manager about your values; vote your proxies.

An Inconvenient Truth @ IPJC

IPJC hosted three screenings in early October with discussion, and sponsored showings in multiple states. Learn more about what you can do to affect global warming at www.climatecrisis.org/takeaction

Women's Justice Circles

Call 206.223.1138 today and join us to:

- Build community
- Act for justice on behalf of low-income women
- Affect systems that address poverty

Join a fall Circle: http://www.ipjc.org/programs/justice_circle_dates.htm

English—Seattle, Tacoma, Yakima

Spanish—Burien, Granger, Mt. Vernon, Wenatchee



Justice Retreat

Linda Haydock, SNJM facilitated a three day retreat at St. Aloysius Parish, Spokane in September on:

- Scripture
- Social Justice
- Contemplation
- Ignatian Spirituality
- A Faith that Does Justice

Hope Calendar

Make your holiday gift list and help spread the story of the Church of Mary Magdalene and Mary's Place. The 2007 *Beauty & Strength: Women of Mary's Place Speak of Homelessness & Hope* calendars are now on sale for \$10. Please call if you would like to purchase or help distribute: 206.621.8474

peace & justice center

Harm Not Earth Community



Megan McKenna, Ph.D.



Saturday
November 18th
9:00—12:30
St. Joseph Parish
Social Hall
732 18th Ave E

Internationally known theologian, storyteller and lecturer. Author of over 25 books, including *Send My Roots Rain: A Spirituality of Justice and Mercy*; and *On Your Mark: Reading Mark in the Shadow of the Cross*. Megan weaves scripture, story, poetry and image together in a dramatic way that invites transformation and brings meaning and hope to our world.

Join us for the morning to:

- Hear Creation stories from Genesis and around the world
- Consider a spirituality of ecology, land and resources
- Share prayer and ritual
- Give yourself a morning of reflection before Thanksgiving

\$10 Pre-registration • \$15 at the door

Pre-Registration \$10—Complete and return this form before November 1st to:
IPJC, 1216 NE 65th St, Seattle, WA 98115.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Immigration Resources

American Friends Service Committee
www.afsc.org/immigrants-rights

Catholic Legal Immigration Network
www.cliniclegal.org

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking
www.castla.org

Fair Immigration Reform Movement
www.fairimmigration.org

Immigrant Legal Resource Center
www.ilrc.org

Justice for Immigrants
www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Lesbian and Gay Immigration Rights Task Force
www.lgirtf.org

National Immigration Forum
www.immigrationforum.org

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
www.nnirr.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services
www.nccbuscc.org/mrs

Immigration Actions

1. Gather a group to read and discuss this issue of *A Matter of Spirit*.
2. Hold a panel on immigration reform legislation.
3. Contact your legislator about current immigration legislation, including the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2006 (S2611).
4. Support the passage of the "DREAM Act," Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act.
5. Read, study and discuss the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letters and statements on immigration.
6. Research how the Real ID Act will affect your state.
7. Run a series of church bulletin or bulletin board spots on myths and facts about immigrants.
8. Contact your local media. See sample letters to the editor at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.
9. Distribute immigrant prayer cards, also available from Justice for Immigrants.
10. Invite immigrants to share their story with members of your community.

A Matter of Spirit is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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Oregon Province Jesuits

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Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province

Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, Western Province

Tacoma Dominicans

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DID YOU KNOW?

Overall, annual taxes paid by immigrants to all levels of governments more than offset the costs of services received, generating a net annual surplus of \$25 billion to \$30 billion.

—Source: www.urban.org/publications/305184.html

The largest wave of immigration to the U.S. since the early 1900s coincided with our lowest national unemployment rate and fastest economic growth.

—Source: www.justiceforimmigrants.org/myths.html

Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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return service requested

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before the post office does.
It will save us \$1.09!!!

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