

12 Sunday per Annum - C
Zechariah 12:10-11, 13:1;
Galatians 3:26-29;
Luke 9:18-24
Little Flower - 6/23/13

My Brothers and Sisters,

In today's second reading, Paul wrote to the Galatians: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Although this statement does not sound radical to us, it was radical in Paul's time. The Jew considered themselves saved; non-Jews were not saved. Free persons were persons with rights; slaves were non-persons without rights. Men considered themselves and were considered superior to women. Jesus leveled all these distinctions: all are one in Christ Jesus.

Currently Congress is debating an immigration law. There is much misunderstanding about the Catholic Church's position regarding immigration. Earlier this spring, Archbishop Tobin shared with the priests a summary of the Church's position on immigration. He asked priests to talk about immigration in homilies.

"Does the Catholic Church believe in 'open borders?' No, Church teaching supports the right of sovereign nations to control their borders. Enforcement of our borders, however, should include the protection of the basic human rights and dignity of the migrant and not place lives at risk."¹

"Does the Catholic Church support illegal immigration? The Catholic Church does not support or encourage illegal immigration because (1) it is contrary to federal law, and (2) it is not good either for society because of the presence of a large population living outside the legal structures or the migrant, who is subjected to abuse, exploitation, and death in the desert. Instead, the Church is advocating changing a broken law so that undocumented persons can obtain legal status in our country and enter the United States legally to work and support their families."

What does the Catholic Church support? The Church supports just and compassionate immigration reform which would provide a path to citizenship for undocumented persons in the country; preserve family unity as a corner-stone of our national immigration system; provide legal paths for low-skilled immigrant workers to come and work in the United States; restore due process protections to our immigration enforcement policies; and address the root causes of migration, such as persecution and economic disparity.

My brothers and sisters, we are "a nation of immigrants—we're united by a national creed, a set of common ideals, and the fact is that nearly all of our families come from somewhere else." The Archbishop would ask us to encourage our senators and representatives to support just and compassionate immigration reform. At the doors of Church there are Campaign for Citizenship cards. In my bulletin letter, there is a link to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' "Justice for Immigrants" website. The Old Testament Book of Leviticus suggests how we should approach the issue of immigration: "*You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God*" [19:34].

¹Archbishop Joseph Tobin, C.Ss.R., "Support for Immigration Reform," Archdiocesan Business Meeting, April 16, 2013. All the non-Scriptural quotations come from this document as does the content of paragraph five.