

Justice for Immigrants: The Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Introduction

The Catholic social tradition recognizes that people are social by nature and that the organization of society affects how well it protects the dignity of individuals and the ability of people to form community and participate fully in society. Social life provides the context in which people either thrive or encounter obstacles that prevent them from attaining their potential, making it an important topic for Catholic social teaching (CST). The second of the United States Council of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) seven themes of CST, the call to family, community, and participation, reflects the Church's teaching on this topic. This principle has been developed in a number of ways in the Catholic social tradition, emerging in the church's teaching on the common good, the importance of the family as a basic unit of society, and the need to overcome marginalization by allowing everyone to participate in social life. The USCCB summarizes the principle in this way:

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together

the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.¹

Reflect on the experiences, beliefs, and values that have shaped your understanding of community.

- Name the communities with which you identify, such as family, neighborhood, church, school, interest group, team, and nation. How would you order these communities according to their significance in your life? What values and beliefs inform the order?
- What is the nature of your participation in the communities you listed in response to the previous set of questions? Identify any obstacles that may have prevented you from fully participating in any of these communities?
- Identify specific ways you may have seen the building of community in a service-learning setting. Also, identify ways you may have seen community being diminished and people's participation in community thwarted in a service-learning setting.

This chapter will explore the call to family, community, and participation by examining the Catholic Church's response to issues associated with migration, a reality that can both disrupt social life and lead to new expressions of community. This chapter will focus on the USCCB's response to migration with particular attention to the collaborative work of the US and Mexican bishops. As this chapter will highlight, the US-Mexico border provides an important context for contemporary social analysis and ethical reflection on migration in the Americas. Consider your beliefs and assumptions about migration using the following questions.

- Does your family's history inform your views on migration? Explain.
- What is the significance of citizenship and nationality for you? How do these beliefs inform your position on immigration policy? What values inform your position?

1. USCCB, "Seven Themes of Catholic Social Thought" available online at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>.

- Have any service-learning settings you may be familiar with led you to examine the situation of immigrants in the United States? If so, did your examination prompt you to think differently about immigrants and the policies that affect immigration patterns and the experiences of migrants? Explain.

This chapter will examine how the call to family, community, and participation has developed as a principle of CST by highlighting writings on the common good and family life. Since the early social encyclicals, CST has insisted that people are obligated to promote the common good. Specifically, this chapter will explore how the principle informs Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI's positions on private property and supports Pope John XXIII's argument for global solidarity. With a basic understanding of the common good, the chapter will turn to the role of the family in strengthening community life. Pope John Paul II, in particular, highlighted the social dimension of the family and, using the principle of subsidiarity, suggested that strengthening families contributes to the common good from the bottom up. In the next section, the chapter will draw on the joint pastoral letter of the US and Mexican bishops to explore their application of CST to the topic of migration in the context of the Americas. Next, the chapter will draw on sociological data and the scholarship of Catholic theologian Daniel Groody to analyze the situation of undocumented workers—immigrants residing and working in the United States without legal permission from the US government. The final section of the chapter provides a summary followed by a vignette drawn from an actual service-learning setting and a series of questions designed to help readers practice aspects of the see-judge-act process.

The Call to Family, Community, and Participation in Catholic Social Teaching

Early Social Encyclicals Oppose Individualism and Collectivism

Throughout its history, CST has defended the dignity of the individual and called for meeting the needs of the community. These

commitments are reflected in the Catholic social tradition's rejection of individualism—a system in which individual rights supersede community needs—and collectivism—a system of collective control over political and economic matters—in favor of an approach to social life that balances the rights and freedoms of the individual and the needs and interests of the community. This stance provides the foundation for the Catholic Church's teaching on the common good.

The early social encyclicals developed an understanding of the common good in response to the two dominant systems of the Industrial era—liberal capitalism and socialism. Pope Leo XIII critiqued liberal capitalism for promoting excessive individualism at the expense of the needs of the community. The pope also rejected the socialist alternative in fear that too much state control would promote excessive collectivism and threaten the right to private property. The concept of the common good emerges within this concern for the natural right to private property. Following his predecessor, Pope Pius XI used the principle of the common good to argue for the just limitations on private property for the sake of the community. He explained in *Quadragesimo anno* (*The Reconstruction of Social Order*, 1931) that CST defends the following:

The twofold character of ownership, called usually individual or social according as it regards either separate persons or the common good. For they have always unanimously maintained that nature, rather the Creator Himself, has given man the right of private ownership not only that individuals may be able to provide for themselves and their families but also that the goods which the Creator destined for the entire family of mankind may through this institution truly serve this purpose. (No. 45)

Pius XI's understanding of the common good is grounded in the conviction that there is a universal purpose for created things, namely, to sustain the whole human family. This view leaves room for personal and social ownership of property. The common good refers to those goods that contribute to the thriving of the whole community. Pius XI, like Leo XIII, argues that everyone has a responsibility to foster

the common good and that the state is obligated to protect the common good.

Pope John XXIII and Vatican II: The Global Common Good

Pope John XXIII builds on the foundation of the early social encyclicals by defending both the dignity of the individual and the importance of community. Writing in the 1960s, John XXIII demonstrated a heightened awareness of the global dimensions of the human community—an awareness with implications for understanding the common good. In his social encyclical *Mater et magistra* (*Christianity and Social Progress*, 1961), he pointed out that nations are increasingly interconnected. He referred specifically to the international economy, arguing that it should be regulated according to the demands of the global common good. He also suggested specific demands for individual nations and the international community. The demands of the common good on the national level include demands that nations foster as much employment as possible, eliminate inequalities, and evaluate progress in light of future generations. In *Mater et magistra* (*MM*), John XXIII states that the common good demands that the international community avoid excessive competition and promote economic growth for developing countries (nos. 79–80).

Reflecting the thought of John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council assumes an interdependent world that transcends nations. *Gaudium et spes* (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, 1965) discusses the implications of this reality for the common good:

Every day human interdependence grows more tightly drawn and spreads by degrees over the whole world. As a result the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group

must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire human family. (No. 26)

Following Vatican II, CST attended to the universal complexion of the common good. This focus affects the Church's position on issues such as international development, human rights, the environment, and migration. Regarding migration, CST maintains that the common good transcends borders but that this does not mean that nations do not have the right and responsibility to regulate their borders and provide security for their citizens. According to *Gaudium et spes* (GS), this right, however, cannot override the responsibility to protect the "needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups" (no. 26).

Pope John Paul II on Subsidiarity and the Family

CST calls for the various levels and units of social life—family, neighborhood, town, county, state, nation—to relate according to the principle of subsidiarity. This principle calls for larger social units to solve problems and make decisions for smaller social units only if the smaller unit is unable to do so. If a smaller unit cannot or does not achieve the necessary goods to thrive, the larger community has a responsibility to take action.

In *Familiaris consortio* (*On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*, 1981) Pope John Paul II draws on the principle of subsidiarity to argue for the protection of the privacy and legitimate autonomy of the family in society. According to *Familiaris consortio* (FC), "By virtue of this principle, the State cannot and must not take away from families the functions that they can just as well perform on their own or in free associations; instead it must positively favor and encourage as far as possible responsible initiative by families" (no. 45). John Paul II grounds this argument in the conviction that the family is the basic cell of society, because it provides the most immediate experience of relationship. Ideally, the family prepares people to participate in society by instilling the virtues necessary for social life. Family life can teach people about their responsibility toward others, and promote the virtues of solidarity, compassion, and fidelity. Because of this, society should be concerned with promoting healthy

families by providing the respect and support they need to thrive. John Paul II suggests the following:

The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and nourishes it continually through its role of service to life: it is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is within the family that they find the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of the existence and development of society itself. Thus, far from being closed in on itself, the family is by nature and vocation open to other families and to society, and undertakes its social role. (*FC*, no. 42)

Based on the conviction that the family should be protected as the foundation of a healthy society, John Paul II argues for the legal recognition of specific rights of the family. Among them, he argues that families have “the right to exist and progress as a family,” and he argues that families have “the right to emigrate as a family in search of a better life” (*FC*, no. 46). This understanding of the rights of the family informs the Catholic Church’s position on migration, which challenges immigration policies that perpetuate family separation. For this reason, the reunification of families is one of the top priorities in the Church’s stance on immigration policies.

The Catholic Church’s Response to Immigration to the United States

Church of Immigrants

Immigration has been a concern for the Catholic Church in the United States since it began as a church of immigrants in the eighteenth century and as it grew as waves of Europeans, including Irish, Italians, and Germans, immigrated to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Church responded to the needs of immigrants by defending their dignity against xenophobia—fear or hatred of foreigners—and discrimination, advocating for their rights as workers, and providing a space for the celebration

of culture in a new context.² The European-born immigrants who made up the majority of Catholics in the United States in the early part of the twentieth century faced suspicions that they were unpatriotic. US Catholics were divided on how to articulate that they were both Roman Catholic and American, with so-called “Romanists” advocating for parochial schools and all-Catholic associations and so-called “Americanists” supporting public schools and collaboration with Protestants in labor unions.³ The struggles of early Catholic immigrants in the United States, although particular to that time period, highlight some of the primary issues that migrants face today—being vulnerable to exploitation of their labor, facing xenophobia and various forms of discrimination, often having to defend themselves against accusations of being un-American.

The Bishops of the United States and Mexico: *Strangers No Longer*

The Catholic Church in the United States continues to include a large immigrant population but demographics have shifted since the early twentieth century when most Catholic immigrants were from Europe. In 2010, the majority of foreign-born residents in the United States were from Mexico, followed by immigrants from South and East Asia.⁴ The USCCB’s response to migration reflects these demographic trends, with much of their effort focused on the issues associated with the US-Mexico border and the migration flows from Central and South America.

In 2003, the USCCB collaborated with the Catholic bishops of Mexico to write a joint pastoral letter entitled, *Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope* (SNL). The letter builds on a history of CST on immigration, emphasizing the demands of the

2. Jay Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NJ: Double Day, 1985), 311–14.

3. To learn more about the tensions experienced by early Catholic immigrants to the United States, see Jay Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

4. Pew Research Center (January 9, 2012) available online at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/01/09/u-s-foreign-born-population-how-much-change-from-2009-to-2010/>.

common good and the dignity of individuals and families as criteria for evaluating the reality of immigration. This letter is notable for its message as well as its collaborative development. The USCCB and the Mexican Conference of Catholic Bishops, who lead the Catholic Church in two nations whose perspectives on migration are grounded in different contexts, jointly declared that immigration is not just about national identity or affiliation. By working together to address the issue of migration, the bishops from the United States and Mexico modeled the solidarity for which the Church has consistently advocated in debates on immigration. The bishops of the United States and Mexico both promote solidarity in their joint letter by issuing pastoral directives that will help people in both countries respond to the situation of migrants and develop public policy directives that can help governments respond justly to the reality of migration. The principles of CST, especially the call to family, community, and participation, inform the bishops' pastoral directives and policy recommendations.

The bishops' letter identifies challenges and dangers that migrants often face—economic hardship at home, unsafe passage to their destination, and lack of protection where they settle—and notes that, as a result, migrants often find themselves in unstable or dangerous situations without the assistance they need. This is especially true for undocumented migrants afraid to seek assistance or legal protection for fear that they will be detained or deported. Many undocumented migrants seek refuge in religious organizations because they are afraid of the state.⁵ Churches and faith-based organizations are thus in a unique position to establish trust among migrants and are able to provide them with resources regardless of their legal status.

The bishops of the United States and Mexico recognize the position of religious organizations, including the Catholic Church, to serve immigrants in need of help and commit themselves to their pastoral care, inviting local churches to always reveal a "spirit of hospitality" toward migrants (*SNL*, no. 42). Offering hospitality involves

5. Margarita Mooney, "The Catholic Bishops Conferences of the United States and France: Engaging Immigration as a Public Issue," *American Behavioral Scientist* (Vol. 49: 11): 1455–70.

overcoming xenophobia and hostility toward migrants, providing resources that they need to adjust to a new culture and achieve social stability. Church leaders, in particular, should undertake the task of "the building of structures of solidarity to accompany the migrant" (*SNL*, no. 40). The bishops stress that the Christian faith mandates welcoming the migrant, asking people to see Christ in the face of the stranger and the outcast, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). Within this theological framework, responding to the migrant is part of the Church's ongoing task of conversion toward Christ. The bishops describe the implications of this:

Part of the process of conversion of mind and heart deals with confronting attitudes of cultural superiority, indifference, and racism; accepting migrants not as foreboding aliens, terrorists, or economic threats, but rather as persons with dignity and rights, revealing the presence of Christ; and recognizing migrants as bearers of deep cultural values and rich faith traditions. (*SNL*, no. 40)

The Church calls people to see the migrant first and foremost as a person with the same dignity and rights as all others and to serve the needs of immigrants without legal status-based discrimination.

Many migrants have chosen to leave family members behind in order to come to the United States to work and send money home. In 2005 immigrants sent an estimated \$233 billion US dollars to family in their country of origin.⁶ This money supports international development when wealthier countries fail to provide such funds through international aid or enact unjust trade policies that disadvantage impoverished countries. Ultimately, the lack of international solidarity perpetuates economically driven migration and leads to the separation of families. This is problematic in light of the principle of the call to family, community, and participation because it ignores the demands of the global common good, and it undermines the basic social structure of the family. The reunification of families is a top priority for the bishops of

6. Mary DeLory, "International Migration: Social, Economic, and Humanitarian Considerations," in Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Geschutz, *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 43.

Catholic Social Teaching on Migration Rights

CST has insisted on the right to migrate since Pope Pius XII's *Exsul familia Nazarethana* (*The Exiled Family from Nazareth*, 1952). The Catholic Church's teaching, however, has also called for the investigation of the root causes of migration and the creation of conditions that will eliminate migration that is forced by economic hardship. CST has consistently challenged unrestricted liberal capitalism that exacerbates the gap between wealthy and poor nations. In *Populorum progressio* (*The Development of Peoples*, 1967) Pope Paul VI criticized a type of tyranny that results when profits and free competition are the guiding norms of economics (no. 26). The disparity of wealth among nations, supported by unfair trade agreements that favor wealthier nations and multinational corporations, creates the conditions in which citizens of less developed countries, desperate to gain financial security, often feel compelled by necessity to migrate. Critiquing this reality, the US and Mexican bishops suggest that "this is the ideal situation for which the world and both countries should strive: one in which migration flows are driven by choice, not necessity" (SNL, no. 59).

the United States and Mexico. They critique immigration policies that weaken family unity and argue that the situation encourages undocumented immigration. The bishops argue that "a new framework must be established that will give Mexican families more opportunities to legally reunite with their loved ones in the United States" (SNL, no. 66).

The same economic forces that motivate migrants to leave their families in Mexico provide jobs in the United States. The reality is that immigrants (documented and undocumented) respond to a high demand in the US job market, working in jobs that many Americans do not want. Immigrants often work in construction, agriculture, and the service industry—traditionally, low-paying and labor-intensive jobs. Furthermore, the demand of US consumers for cheap goods and

services (especially when this demand is unmet by strong advocacy for labor) creates an economy that is dependent on low-wage workers. The bishops, among others, argue that because the US economy has created the demand for migrant labor, it needs to make provisions for safe and fair participation in the economy. The bishops state, "the United States needs Mexican laborers to maintain a healthy economy and should make a special effort to provide legal avenues for Mexican workers to obtain in the United States jobs that provide a living wage and appropriate benefits and labor protections" (*SNL*, no. 72). The bishops continue the Catholic social tradition's insistence on the rights of workers, which is grounded in the dignity of the human person and the dignity of work. These rights, which include a just wage, safe working conditions, and nondiscrimination in the workplace, transcend the legal status of an individual. The bishops defend the dignity of documented and undocumented workers while advocating for pathways to legalization of migrant workers in the United States. They state, "We recognize that, as an alternative to undocumented migration, an efficient legal pathway must be established that protects the basic labor rights of foreign-born workers" (*SNL*, no. 75). Specifically, they suggest that the United States needs to provide a greater number of both temporary and permanent worker visas to prevent the abuse of undocumented migrant workers (*SNL*, no. 72).

The principle of human dignity is at the heart of the bishops' response to migration. The bishops echo Pope John Paul II's unconditional defense of the dignity of the migrant. In his address on World Migration Day, he stated that "his [the migrant's] irregular legal status cannot allow the migrant to lose his dignity, since he is endowed with inalienable rights."⁷ In other words, human rights must be protected regardless of one's legal status. This does not mean that the Catholic Church supports illegal immigration. In fact, the Catholic social tradition explicitly supports the right and responsibility of a nation to control its borders. However, the way that it controls its borders cannot violate the dignity of each person or the disregard the global common good. *Strangers No Longer* states,

7. John Paul II, "Undocumented Migrants," no. 2, 1996 World Migration Day Address, available online at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_25071995_undocumented_migrants_en.html.

The Catholic Church recognizes the right and responsibility of sovereign nations to control their borders and to ensure the security interests of their citizens. Therefore, we accept the legitimate role of the U.S. and Mexican governments in intercepting undocumented migrants who attempt to travel through or cross into one of the two countries. We do not accept, however, some of the policies and tactics that our governments have employed to meet this shared responsibility. (No. 78)

Using the principle of human dignity, the bishops critique some of the tactics practiced in the detainment centers on the US-Mexico border. The bishops offer examples of inhumane treatment, citing

The Kino Border Initiative

A number of religious and nonreligious organizations have responded to the need for humanitarian relief at the US-Mexico border. For example, the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) brings together the resources of the Catholic community to minister to migrants on both sides of the US-Mexico border. Sponsored by the California Province of Jesuits, the Catholic Diocese of Tucson, the Mexico Province of Jesuits, the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, the Jesuit Refugee Service/USA, and the Archdiocese of Hermosillo, KBI coordinates services near the border for recently deported migrants. The services include the provision of meals, first aid, and shelter. KBI also promotes education about migration by sponsoring immersion programs for high school and university students, allowing them to observe the reality of migration at the border. By focusing on collaboration among parishes on both sides of the US-Mexico border, KBI promotes solidarity and provides a visible expression of the Christian discipleship transcending national borders to defend human dignity and enhance the common good. See Web site: www.kinoborderinitiative.org.

“documented abuses of migrants,” the use of “excessive force” to detain migrants, and the use of “dilapidated detention facilities” to contain unaccompanied minors (*SNL*, nos. 80–82). The border initiatives employed to deter illegal immigration have proved to be largely ineffective, only driving migrants to pursue dangerous routes, as in the case of the popular Sonora Desert route. The number of migrant deaths has doubled since 1994 when the United States began enforcing more stringent border patrol at known crossing points.⁸ Drawing on the principle of human dignity, the bishops issue a defense of the sanctity of life and challenge the United States and Mexico to control their borders in a way that minimizes death and assists “migrants in distress” (*SNL*, no. 89).

Reading the Signs of the Times:

Undocumented Immigrants in the United States

The context of migration is always shifting, making ongoing social analysis necessary. Because immigration is such an important political topic in the United States today, one is challenged continually to evaluate policies and proposals for immigration reform. This section will illustrate a small piece of a much larger and complex reality, focusing on the issue of undocumented migrants in the United States today. By highlighting the strong economic factors behind illegal migration to the United States and briefly outlining the limited pathways to legal migration, this section sets up an ethical dilemma. Describing the work of Catholic theologian Daniel Groody on the topic demonstrates how the Catholic social tradition can inform the issue of migration.

Migration to the United States is largely influenced by economic factors shaped by the international community. The 2009 United Nations Human Development Report reveals a strong connection

8. US Government Accountability Office, *Illegal Immigration: Border Crossing Deaths Have Doubled Since 1995; Border Patrol's Efforts to Prevent Deaths Have Not Been Fully Evaluated*, GAO-06-770 (Washington, DC: US Government Accountability Office, August 2006), 16; as cited in Donald Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good and Sovereignty,” in Kerwin and Geschutz, *And You Welcomed Me*, 113.

between migration and the pursuit of opportunities to develop as people and improve life for their families. The report indicates that the majority of international migrants travel from an underdeveloped country to a more economically developed country.⁹ Mexico, the country of origin for most of the US foreign-born population, has a per capita Gross National Income rate of \$8,920 as compared to the US \$47,240.¹⁰ The growing economic disparity between wealthy and poor nations undoubtedly fuels increased migration. Today, almost half of the world's population lives on less than two US dollars a day, and around 550 million people live on less than one US dollar per day.¹¹ This reality makes US wages attractive, even if workers are making less than the 2009 legal minimum of \$7.25 per hour. Examining the reality of immigration in light of the global economy highlights the connection between human development and migration flows.

Opportunities for legal migration to the United States are limited. The US Department of Homeland Security lists four broad categories designating pathways for non-US citizens to achieve legal permanent resident (LPR) status. These categories are presented from the greatest number granted in 2009 to the least: (1) family-sponsorship (which includes children, spouses, and parents of US citizens), (2) employer-based sponsorship preference, (3) refugees and asylees preference, and (4) diversity preference (allowing immigrants of countries that have low migration flows to the United States).¹² The majority of family sponsorships were given to spouses of US citizens followed by parents and children of US citizens.¹³ Even these sponsorships are difficult and costly to obtain. For example, an immigrant from Mexico, whose natural citizens accounted for the greatest number of LPRs in

9. UN Human Development Report 2009 available online at http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Overview.pdf.

10. Data on GNI provided by the World Bank available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD>.

11. Global Commission on International Migration 2005 Report, 11.

12. US Department of Homeland Security 2009 Report on US Legal Permanent Residents http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/lpr_fr_2009.pdf

13. Ibid.

2009,¹⁴ would be considered ineligible for the diversity preference. Employer-based preferences are highly sought after but limited in number, accounting for only 12.7 percent of the LPRs in 2009.¹⁵ Out of that 12.7 percent, the majority were professionals with an advanced degree or skilled workers in a sector identified as a priority area for the US economy.¹⁶

The majority of undocumented workers seeking permanent resident status in the United States are less-skilled workers without college degrees. Although the data show how difficult it is for these individuals to obtain legal status, they fulfill a strong demand in the US job market. As demographics of developed countries shift toward an aging population with lower birthrates, the need for unskilled laborers increases. Without a population willing to take low-income, less-skilled jobs, there is a high demand for migrant workers. The US immigration policy, however, does not reflect these demographic and economic shifts, offering the majority of employer-based preferences to highly educated professionals with specialized skills. US lawyers John Hoeffner and Michele Pistone conclude that "in particular, a discrepancy exists between the strength of forces propelling migrants into the United States and the ability of current law to recognize in some official way the reality of their presence. Hence, the problem of the undocumented immigrant."¹⁷

The problem of the undocumented immigrant can be examined from the perspectives of many different people—politicians, immigration lawyers, business owners and employees, and the millions people that pursue international migration each year.¹⁸ Catholic priest and scholar Daniel Groody examines migration from a theological perspective, emphasizing the Christian belief that the human person reflects the image and likeness of God. On this basis, he

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16.. Ibid.

17. John Hoeffner and Michele Pistone, "But the Laborers Are . . . Many: Catholic Social Teaching on Business, Labor, and Economic Migration." in Kerwin and Geschutz, *And You Welcomed Me*, 69.

18. The UN Human Development Report estimates that two-hundred million people pursued international migration in 2009. See http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Overview.pdf.

challenges some of the language used to categorize migrants such as *aliens* and *illegal*. Such language can obscure the humanity of migrants and promote attitudes and policies that undermine their human rights. Furthermore, categories fail to identify adequately the economic injustices motivating migration flows. Groody suggests "categories such as legality and illegality, the documented and the undocumented, and citizen and alien, not only fail to come to terms with a new global reality, but they also leave gaping areas of injustice in their wake."¹⁹ Emphasizing the humanity of migrants has moral implications, mandating policies that honor the rights of migrants and protect their dignity.

Summary and Integration for Service Learners

This chapter explored some ethical dimensions of migration with a focus on migration from Mexico to the United States. The Catholic Church has responded to the immediate needs of migrants, many of whom lack social and legal support. Recognizing the situation of these migrants, the USCCB and Mexican bishops have challenged the churches to be a place of refuge and help for migrants, providing hospitality and assistance. The Catholic Church in the United States has also engaged in advocacy for just immigration reform guided by the priorities of protecting the rights and dignity of migrants. Their advocacy also focuses on promoting economic justice that allows everyone to participate in the international common good and on defending the unity of the family.

These guidelines are rooted in the Christian theological tradition, which insists that people are social beings, created in the image of a relational God and created for community with others. The call to family, community, and participation is rooted in this theology and has developed as a foundational principle of CST. The issues surrounding migration highlight the importance of this principle as it challenges people to promote solidarity in the international

19. Daniel Groody, "Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees," *Theological Studies*, Vol. 70 (2000): 639.

community, create pathways for participation in society among the marginalized, and protect the dignity of the family.

Having learned about some ethical dimensions of migration, revisit your responses to the questions in the introduction. Has the chapter led you to rethink any of your answers? Has it confirmed any of your assumptions about the meaning of community or the importance of family? How does the principle of the call to family, community, and participation inform your attitudes about migrants? Use the following vignette and questions to practice the see-judge-act process in relation to this topic.

Meeting an Immigrant

Service-Learning Vignette

A service learner working as a translator in a free health clinic for women spent an afternoon hearing one woman's story of migrating to the United States. Originally from a small town in Oaxaca, Mexico, the woman decided to come to the United States three years ago because she needed a job to support her aging parents. She used her entire savings to hire a guide to cross the US-Mexico border and to pay for a bus ticket to San Francisco, where she could live with relatives. She now works as a housekeeper for a woman she met at church. She told the student that she would like to go to school to become a teacher but she cannot afford it because she only makes \$3.50 an hour and she tries to send home as much money as possible. She also told the student that she misses her parents terribly but is afraid that if she went home to visit, she would not make it back across the border. She thinks that the best thing she can do for her family members right now is to keep sending them money.

See: Social Analysis

- What social, political, and economic factors may have contributed to the woman's decision to migrate? Can you identify any social injustices that may have led to her migration?
- Consider the obstacles preventing the woman from finding sustainable work and being with her family. How many of these

factors can be attributed to her decisions? What factors are beyond her control?

Judge: Ethical Reflection

- Consider the woman's situation in light of the principle of the call to community. What priorities emerge? When you consider the implications of this principle, do you see the woman's situation differently?
- Evaluate Groody's challenge to some of the language used to categorize migrants in light of CST. Can you identify language that better reflects the migrants' dignity?

Act: Promoting Justice

- Based on what you have learned about CST and some of the challenges surrounding migration in the United States today, what do you think should be done to address the issue of undocumented migration?
- Identify immediate and long-term actions aligned with CST that respond to the situation of undocumented immigrants. What is the role of faith communities, nonprofit organizations, and the government in taking these actions?

Suggestions for Further Social Analysis in a Service-Learning Context

- What services are available for immigrants in a selected city or service-learning context? How are these services promoted and accessed? What services can immigrants obtain without documentation?
- Research data on migration flows into a selected city, and identify any patterns. What political and economic factors might be motivating these migration patterns?
- Research the immigration enforcement policies and practices of a selected state. How do these relate to federal policies? What are some of the current debates behind state and federal policies?