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SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
Continuing Education Encore Events

Transcript of
“Kinship Across Borders: Catholic Ethics and Migration”

presented on November 7, 2017

by
Dr. Kristin E. Heyer

Dr. Jane Regan:

It's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Heyer, and really honored to be welcoming her as a colleague in Boston College. Kristin Heyer is professor of theological ethics in the Boston College Theology Department. She has academic roots on both sides of the coasts, having received her B.A. from Brown University and her Ph.D. from Boston College. She taught at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, and Santa Clara University prior to returning to Boston College in 2015.

Dr. Heyer's books include *Kinship Across Borders: A Christian Ethic of Immigration*, which came out in 2012; *Prophetic and Public: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism*, which came out in '06, and actually it won the College Theology Society Best Book Award. Both titles are published by Georgetown University Press.

She's also published the co-edited volumes, *Public Theology and the Global Common Good: The Contributions of David Hollenbach*, a former faculty person here, *Conscience and Catholicism: Rights, Responsibilities, and Institutional Responses*; and *Catholics and Politics: Dynamic Tensions Between Faith and Power*. All of those are really topics that seem particularly relevant in these days, and they're all for sale at the back by the bookstore.

Her articles have appeared in a variety of academic journals as well as pastoral publications, including *New Theology Review* and the Jesuit weekly magazine, *America*. She is co-chair of the planning committee for Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church, that's the, okay, which takes place next summer in Sarajevo. And so she is trying to figure how to get 500 people to the conference. We're glad she's here; this is the last free moment she has before she... She is an editor of the Moral Tradition Series that Georgetown University Press publishes.

Dr. Heyer served as guest editor for the Fall 2016 issue of *C21 Resources* entitled "Conscience at Work," a publication which serves as the text for a Crossroads online course called "Call to Conscience." Free copies of the publication are available to you at the entrance. And I believe we are teaching that in the spring. Yeah. We'll be teaching that course online in the spring, I think, during Lent. So keep an eye out for it.

In her book *Kinship Across Borders*, Dr. Heyer argues that a Christian immigration ethic calls believers to promote structures and practices marked by kinship and justice. We are grateful to have Dr. Heyer with us this evening to reflect more deeply on the importance of this very timely topic. Please welcome, Dr. Kristin Heyer.

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[Applause]

Dr. Heyer:

Thanks very much to Professor Regan. Thanks also to Melinda Donovan and Dean Stegman for this invitation to join you all this evening. I've appreciated opportunities to collaborate with the STM upon my return to Boston College two years ago. And thanks to all of you for coming out tonight. It's Election Day, post-midterms, pre-holiday crunch. I'm, I'm grateful that you're here.

And actually, concerns about immigration featured in in some of the ads surrounding today's races, particularly in Virginia and New Jersey races, we heard about concerns about immigrants. So I think this is particularly timely to speak this evening, because in my view, immigration really is one of the most urgent signs of our times. And I think this rich tradition of reflection on justice for immigrants can promote a shared good for citizens and newcomers alike.

I think really the time is ripe here in the United States for resources from Catholic ethics to shape discourse about immigration, and I hope offer a counter narrative to the myths that dominate our airwaves. Significant changes brought by President Donald Trump during the first year of his presidency directly reflect his campaign rhetoric that cast immigrants and refugees as threats to the United States. Trump campaigned on promises to deport undocumented immigrants and secure the border with Mexico, a country he charged with sending its criminals, drug dealers, and rapists.

He moved swiftly to make good on campaign promises, issuing executive orders within the first few weeks of his presidency that called for constructing a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, a selective travel ban, and expansion of the nation's detention capacity and expedited removal practices. They also expand those targeted for deportation to include anyone immigration officers judge to pose a risk to public safety or national security.

While the courts contest elements of the order's legal legitimacy, enforcement raids have ensued in at least 20 states, including here in Massachusetts, as you know. Last week, acting Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, director Tom Holman reported he has instructed Homeland Security to quintuple worksite enforcement actions next year.

The administration's internal enforcement measures and accompanying rhetoric have fanned the flames of nationalism, sowed fear in immigrant communities, and eroded civic life. As Catholic and wider resistance has underscored, these moves threaten to harm already vulnerable asylum seekers and divide families of mixed immigration status.

In the name of safeguarding national security, further militarization of the border treats symptoms rather than causes of migration. The U.S. government already spends more on federal immigration enforcement than all other criminal law enforcement agencies combined. And the death toll of migrants crossing the deserts of the Southwest has steadily mounted even as crossings decline.

The bottom photo shows Attorney General Jeff Sessions at the border expanding prosecution procedures for immigrants, whereas the Obama administration initially deported

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those immigrants who had committed only minor offences. And perhaps you know he deported more than all other twentieth century presidents combined. It altered its policy to target primarily those convicted of serious crimes or who had violated deportation orders.

By September of this year, ICE agents had made 43% more arrests since Trump took office, compared to the same period last year. And whereas deportations are not quite on track to exceed last year's numbers, ICE took into custody nearly three times more removable non-citizens without these criminal records during the same period in 2016. And here at the border in Nogales, Sessions referred to "taking our stand against this filth."

So I have to confess, I have found these political characterizations a bit out of step with my own experiences and encounters with immigrants. So I'd like to begin my reflections this evening with some from the border rather than the White House. As my relationships there have been formative for my own research, and folks working there continue their outreach and advocacy no matter which direction the political winds blow.

So the Kino Border Initiative is a bi-national known project of the Jesuit Refugee Service, the California and Mexican provinces of the Jesuits, the Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist, and the two bordering dioceses there in Ambos Nogales. During my last visit there, I spoke with recently-deported migrants at their aid center.

One gentleman had spent 26 of his last 27 years in central California, brought there as a one-year-old by his uncle. He had worked harvesting pistachios and almonds to support his wife and four U.S. citizen children. Even on the occasions he couldn't provide a driver's license for a routine stop, he had had no trouble. But then in the two prior years, each such stop had landed him in jail with a third resulting in his deportation there to Nogales. He expressed dread at starting over in a country foreign to him.

Up the road at Casa Nazaret, we sat with women who had been deported but were attempting to try the journey north again, in spite of the dangers that posed. The women at the shelter were simply desperate to be reunited with their families in the U.S. One had worked at a Motel 6 in Arizona for many years supporting her two citizen children after her husband had left them. And describing her initial reason for leaving home she said, "In southern Mexico, at home either you eat or you send your kids to school."

The Nazaret House residents repeatedly broke into tears as they shared experiences of being separated from their children, and also experiences in detention. Closer to home at my previous position at Santa Clara University, I encountered undocumented students really struggling with impossible choices.

I begin this recent book with one who recounts how a month after her high school graduation, ICE agents with loaded guns, bullet proof vests, and steel-toed boots surrounded her house, pounding down the door, demanding to see her. As she tells it, "I came out to the front yard where the head agent asked my name while pulling out handcuffs as if standing in front of some criminal. No GPA or a letter of recommendation could save me then. I fell to my knees in front of the agent and began pleading with him to let me stay, telling him I was starting college in a month on a special scholarship. He said, 'Fine, I'll let you go. But only if you tell me where your dad is.'"

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When her mortified mother nodded yes to go ahead and tell him, the student revealed the information and ICE left to arrest her dad at his workplace in front of his boss and coworkers and deport him. The student reflects, "I stood in complete disbelief. I had sold out my own dad for an education."

So experiences like these where questions of citizenship and enforcement tactics take on flesh and blood have shaped my reflection about the Christian narrative in light of migration and globalization. Ours is an era of unprecedented migration, and President Trump inherited an outdated system, issuing from decades of congressional inaction.

When residents are confronted with newcomers, some reactions reflect the nation's historic openness to outsiders, and others, its deep ambivalence. Legitimate concerns regarding disproportionate burdens on local services and the need to set workable limits or safeguards understandably persist. At the same time, mounting threats to human dignity indicate that urgency of the system's genuine overhaul.

For our immigrant nation's celebratory narrative underscores ideas like hospitality, liberty, democracy. We might imagine beneath the photo here, Emma Lazarus's "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free."

And yet, legislative debates about immigration have historically centered around issues of national security, economic instrumentalism and social costs rather than human rights. Today, policy debates remain framed by a law-and-order lens, which casts unauthorized immigrants as willful lawbreakers, posing national security threats. Trump enacted a law-and-order mantle throughout his campaign promising to "Make America safe again."

A criminal rhetorical frame facilitates scapegoating immigrants as threats to the rule of law without really evoking skepticism about outdated policies like the considerable mismatches between labor needs and legal avenues for work. Recent studies indicate immigrants are less likely to commit serious crimes than U.S. citizens. And that higher rates of immigration correlate with lower rates of violent and property crime.

So the rule of law occupies a privileged place in our country. And yet I was struck during my visit to an Operation Streamline hearing in Tucson by the sharp contrast between our law-and-order rhetoric on the one hand, and the lack of accountability and transparency in our border patrol procedures on the other, or really, the lack of due process often offered detainees.

We watched there as young men and women shackled at the wrist and the midsection and the ankles were collectively herded through the legal process, lacking sufficient time with an attorney to comprehend what was happening, and in several cases, lacking adequate translation. Migrants from Honduras and El Salvador flee homes with the world's highest number of homicides per capita where gang members murder with impunity. So in such cases, the threat driving such migration is precisely the breakdown of the rule of law at home.

President Trump has continued to collapse distinctions between immigration and terrorism, with his pardon of Sheriff Joe Arpaio sending a message of impunity for law enforcement,

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and symbolizing the centrality of a law-and-order bravado to his immigration narrative. So another common paradigm deems immigrants economic threats, whether as a net burden on the tax base or competitors for finite social resources and low-wage work opportunities. And this is typically a perception heightened in times of economic downturn.

Beyond studies that consistently show immigrant laborers provide a net benefit to the U.S. economy, the recent estimates indicate, for example, that DACA recipients alone would provide \$460.3 billion to the GDP over the next decade, if DACA survives or is resuscitated. But beyond that, the detention industry profits off of their regular migrants and kind of confounds this economic threat frame.

Elements of the immigration industrial complex have become a transnational multibillion dollar affair. Private companies house nearly half of our nation's immigrant detainees compared to about 25% a decade ago. Share prices for Geo Group and Corrections Corporation of America rose over 100% after Election Day given the president's avowed commitment to increase the incarceration of immigrants. It's called for nearly doubling the number of immigrants detained to 80,000 per day.

And their associates have funneled more than \$10 million to candidates since 1989, spending about \$25 million in lobbying efforts. And finally, the administration has connected these economic anxieties with enduring anxieties over cultural and national identity. Tapping into related anti-immigrant sentiment has provoked demonization of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities.

Bias-related hate crimes surged following the election. Whereas appeals to nostalgia or anxieties about rapid cultural and demographic changes may have remained more hidden or coded in the recent past, a resurgence of white nationalism has brought overtly racist and xenophobic fears into the open. A few weeks ago in Tennessee at the White Lives Matter march, participants chanted "Closed borders, white nation, now we start the deportation."

So representatives, representations rather, of the outsider as a social menace, have long shaped U.S. society's collective imagination. In the 2016 campaign, President Trump consistently played upon fears of the cultural displacement of white working class voters. Such voters, who reported often feeling like strangers in their own land, were three-and-one-half times more likely to favor Trump than those who did not share such concerns. Also, his campaign performed strongest among those who reported their ancestors are American.

Robert Jones has argued Trump successfully converted white evangelical Protestant value voters into nostalgia voters by naming and elevating their anxieties about the country's recent demographic and cultural shifts. So "make America great again" as restoring cultural displacement and economic displacement alike. Conversations about who we are as a nation, the kind of society we wish to share, the role of civic ideals, our histories, our traditions, and understanding our national identity are worth engaging. And frameworks raising economic and security questions also entail legitimate concerns. Yet employed on their own, they serve to distort and eclipse fundamental features of the whole picture.

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Fear of difference is relatively easy to mass market, and it shapes society's imagination in powerful ways. Encounters with reluctant or desperate migrants signals significant dissonance between these exclusionary frameworks and the inhumane impact of recent rhetoric and measures alike. Now, I open with this context in order to shed light on the interests and the values that I think drive our immigration discourse.

If fear and profit largely hold sway dehumanizing newcomers according to these dominant scripts, then I'd like to suggest that Catholic commitments shape a different story, a counter-narrative of our common humanity, our kinship, with implications for a just immigration ethic. I think Christian understandings of what it means to be human, radically critique the pervasive exploitation and these prevailing paradigms.

So this evening I'd like to outline how insights from Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching challenge myths that enable exclusion and abet division. So certainly, the story of Jewish and Christian pilgrim communities is one of migration, diaspora, and the call to live accordingly. Indeed after the commandment to worship one God, no moral imperative is repeated more frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures than the command to care for the stranger. Despite convenient amnesia in our own nation of immigrants, it was Israel's own bitter experience of displacement that undergirded its ethic of just compassion toward outsiders: So "You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you are aliens in the land of Egypt."

When Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled Egypt, the emigre Holy Family becomes the archetype for every refugee family. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus begins his early journey as a migrant and displaced person. Jesus, who in the same Gospel would radically identify with the least, and make hospitality to the stranger the criterion for judgment.

Patterns of migration across Scripture do not readily resolve complex modern dilemmas. Yet Scripture shapes our moral perception. So by engaging the voice of Scripture in a manner that dislocates these dominant frameworks of interpretation, we can become more attuned to how our perspective shapes our moral response and really how Scripture might enhance our perceptive imagination.

So if our conventional politics of immigration are driven by instrumental values, how might a scriptural politics of immigration shape a Catholic counter-narrative? Well, one of the most persistently recurrent themes in Scripture is justice and compassion for the vulnerable. The prophets repeatedly connect bringing justice for the poor to experiencing God. Concern for the economically vulnerable echoes throughout the New Testament as well, particularly in the Gospel of Luke, which depicts Jesus being born in a stable among mere shepherds and inaugurating his public ministry in terms that emphasize a mission to bring Good News to the poor and release the oppressed.

New Testament scholar Donald Senior notes that in the overall landscape of the Gospel stories, the rich and the powerful are often in place, reclining at the table, calculating their harvest, standing comfortably in the front of the sanctuary, or seated on the judgment seat passing judgment over others. The poor, on the other hand, are often mobile and rootless, the sick coming from the four corners of the compass seeking healing, the crowds desperate to hear Jesus, roaming lost and hungry, the leper crouched outside the door. Senior

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suggests that experiences of people on the move reveal a profound dimension of all human experience, and they challenge false ideologies of unlimited resources or unconditional national sovereignty. He thinks that these plague our society and choke its spiritual capacity.

I think similarly, recently the Jesuit Superior General Arturo Sosa talked about self-sufficiency in this regard in terms of idolatry. Or my former colleague Roberto Goizueta has written about security becoming an idol in this regard. So whereas the Scriptures do not provide detailed solutions to contemporary challenges posed by immigration, for people who turn to Scripture for guidance about what kind of people to become, it's clear they should show a deep concern for marginalized persons.

Biblical justice challenges approaches to immigration that are driven by market or security concerns alone. So a key contribution that a scriptural imagination offers then is to bring the perspectives of those most vulnerable and often silenced into the equation.

We have an image here of The Good Samaritan by the Chinese artist He Qi who now lives in Roseville, Minnesota. In Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan, he identifies neighbor love and just living with care for the vulnerable stranger among us. You'll recall Jesus reverses the lawyer's expectations with a story of a perceived enemy's loving response to the one lying in the ditch. Jewish audiences would have been shocked to hear of a discredited priest and a Samaritan exemplar.

In the parable, the priests and the Levite notice the wounded man, and yet they keep their distance to avoid any contact that might defile them. Unlike the Samaritan who sees the man as a fellow human being in distress, the others don't allow themselves to be affected by his plight. By sharp contrast, the Samaritan apprehends the situation as the man in the ditch experiences it. Typical of Jesus's parables where the ordinary keeps breaking out of the extraordinary; I'm sorry, the extraordinary keeps breaking out of the ordinary, the Samaritan surpasses the care that would be required for our fellow countrymen to aid the stranger who might belong to his ethnic group's worst enemies. As Bill Spone notes, "Jesus stretches the limits of vision and compassion precisely where fear, enmity, and inconvenience want to restrict them."

So how might this parable where Jesus exposes the lawyer's categories as too cramped shape our imagination about immigration? Posing the lawyer's very question, "Who is my neighbor?" erects boundaries between members and outsiders. We quickly remove ourselves from the scene to balance abstract obligations. Perceptions of immigrants as threats alone, significantly influence our analysis.

So this prior question of perception shapes our assessment. Whom do we see as the immigrant? Freeloaders who take advantage of American generosity while taking jobs from U.S. citizens? Men queuing up outside the Home Depot? Threats to the neighborhood? Outsiders overcrowding our kids' schools? The women I described from Casa Nazaret? Or the student whose narrative I recounted?

If we see immigrants, the face of immigrants, as illegal, forever foreigners, anchor babies, or if we see separated mothers, displaced third-generation family farmers, taxpayers,

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honest workers, we pursue different avenues of analysis. Seeing immigrants' humanity as primary doesn't resolve conflicting claims over stretched resources and it doesn't absolve cases of immigrant crime, yet it does foreclose on death-dealing practices and invite us away from simplistic scapegoating.

To get at root causes and complex motives, like the Samaritan, we must identify with and become neighbor to the immigrant. Taking the victim's side as our own enjoins not only compassion but also liberation. Just as the Good Samaritan promises additional recompense to the innkeeper, Christians are called to enter the world of the neighbor and leave it in such a way that the neighbor is given freedom along with the very help that is offered.

The un-freedom of present and would-be migrants pointedly illustrates the urgency of this responsibility. The radical hospitality that tutors our vision does not reduce the immigration paradigm to charity or largesse, or move it out of the inclusive civic conversation. But it requires justice. In case anyone is here under duress for extra credit, I've noted the different types of justice that I would like to now talk about. Because I think immigrants encounter legion forms of injustice. Standard treatment of day laborers violates a fundamental fairness of exchange, commutative justice.

So I, as Professor Regan said, I used to live in Los Angeles. And at our parish in East L.A./ Dolores Mission, we had a Guadalupe Homeless Project, and a lot of day laborers would stay there. They could get a shower overnight and then try to get work the next day. And so many of the guys there would tell us they would be hired for a job maybe to paint a house, landscaping work, and so often a homeowner would say, "You did really great work; tell you what, I'll meet you here tomorrow, same time, same place, and I'll just pay you for both days at the end of tomorrow, Is just easier that way, trust me," you know, never to be seen again.

Second, the regional juxtaposition of relative luxury and misery while basic needs go unmet challenges basic notions of distributive justice. So the nearly 2000-mile U.S.-Mexico border spanning six Mexican and four U.S. states bisects the sharpest income divide on the planet. The impact of free trade agreements and utterly outmoded visa policies impede rather than empower persons' active participation in societal life, social justice. A Christian ethic of immigration, then, demands basic unmet responsibilities and justice, particularly given the role the United States has played in shaping conditions that directly contribute to irregular migration.

Recent measures perpetuate the myth that responsibility for irregular migration lies with the border crossers alone. Transnational actors responsible for violent conflict, economic instability, climate change, are eclipsed from view, much less blame. Some have proposed an instability tax be levied upon private and governmental entities that de-stabilize refugee-producing regions: whether hedge funds profiting off of commodity trading and African minerals, weapons manufacturers profiting from selling arms in the Middle East, or other multinationals who profit from degrading and de-stabilizing poor nations.

In terms of the proposed border wall, the inability of small family farmers in Mexico to compete with agricultural subsidies implicates taxpayers to their North. So an immigration ethic attentive to structural and restorative justice demands the national and global

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community resist a crisis management approach in favor of honest contextual assessments of what these enduring patterns are revealing.

So attitudes and policies that compel and then punish irregular migration are profoundly at odds with Christian commitments. In particular, the Tradition's understanding of human rights and the political community squarely challenges the fact that the vast majority of contributing and vulnerable migrants remain excluded from a viable timely path to citizenship and its protections. They're deprived of the primary good of membership, what Hannah Arendt calls "the right to have rights."

Flowing from its scriptural optic nerve of compassion, the Catholic Social Tradition champions robust rights for immigrants and its documents, outreach, and witness. Over a decade ago in their joint Pastoral, "Strangers No Longer Together on the Journey of Hope," the U.S. and Mexican bishops called for their nations to address the root causes of and legal avenues for immigration and to safeguard family unity.

By contrast, border enforcement has remained the primary priority in the U.S. context. Consequent deportation by attrition strategies and removal quotas have nevertheless failed to solve the problem of a significant undocumented presence.

So a Christian immigration ethic is grounded in its vision of the person as inherently sacred and made for community. Our persons are created in the image of God, loved into being by God, and therefore worthy of inherent dignity and respect. Whereas this vision doesn't compromise autonomy, it understands humans to be profoundly interdependent, to be a person is to be in relationship. Hence human rights are claims to goods necessary for each to participate with dignity and community life.

Catholic principles of economic and migration ethics protect not only civil and political rights, but also more robust social and economic rights and responsibilities. These established basically persons' right to remain, right not to have to migrate to fulfill their basic human rights in their homeland, and their right to migrate if they cannot support themselves or their families at home.

This vision of the person is not profoundly at odds with our national narrative at its best. As NETWORK social justice lobby Sister Simone Campbell put it on one of her Nuns on the Bus Tour, "Fear is crippling us and promoting an unpatriotic lie of individualism. After all, the Constitution begins 'we the people,' not 'we who got here first,' 'we the owners of businesses,' or even 'we the citizens.'" She worried we would lose our democracy if we could not return to living in community.

Once people do immigrate, the Catholic Tradition profoundly critiques patterns wherein stable receiving countries accept the labor of millions without offering legal protections. Such shadow societies risk the creation of a permanent underclass, harming both human dignity and the common good. From Pope Leo XIII's 1891 warnings against employer's exploitation through Pope Francis's condemnations of harmful global economic practices, the protection of human dignity has remained the central criterion of economic justice.

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The Tradition makes clear that every economic decision and institution must be judged in light of whether it protects or undermines human dignity realized in community. Pope John Paul II condemned the exploitation of migrant workers based on the principle that capital should be at the service of labor and not labor at the service of capital. This is one of my favorite pictures of him. He's touring a soda manufacturing plant. I mean, it's an Italian chemical plant, but they're making soda in 1982 here.

So this idea that the economy should serve the person raises serious concerns not only about the freedom of markets compared to people, but also the significant financial stakes in a broken immigration system. Detained immigrants fill beds, private buses are filled with deportations. So we inherit a counter-narrative of economic ethics critiquing global dynamics that allow capital and goods and information to flow freely across borders, but not laborers.

Pope Francis has been outspoken about the dictatorship of faceless economies. His image of humans as commodities in a throwaway culture, particularly resonates, I think, with vulnerable migrant workers' experiences. The Southern Poverty Law Center's interviews with undocumented women across sectors of the food industry indicate respondents overwhelmingly feeling like they're seen by employers as disposable workers with no lasting value, to be squeezed of every last drop of sweat and labor before being cast aside.

And I include Archbishop Oscar Romero here, as I think he more poetically elaborates the understanding in the tradition of work as necessarily intelligent and free. He writes, "How beautiful will be the day when all the baptized understand that their work, their job, is a priestly work. That just as I celebrate Mass at this altar, so each carpenter celebrates mass at his workbench, each doctor with the scalpel, the market woman at her stand is performing a priestly office. How many cabdrivers I know listen to this message, they're in their cabs. You are a priest at the wheel, my friends. If you work with honesty, consecrating that taxi of yours to God, bearing a message of peace and love to the passengers who ride in your cab."

Hence, the Catholic Social Tradition explicitly protects the basic human rights of undocumented migrants in host countries in light of longstanding teachings on human and workers' rights that do not depend on citizenship status. With 66% of undocumented immigrants in the United States having lived here for over 10 years, a double society increasingly threatens the common good. One, visible with rights, and one invisible without rights.

Obstructing viable paths to legalization for the majority of immigrants that we welcome in the marketplace but not the voting booth, the college campus, the DMV, the stable workplace, risks making permanent this underclass of disenfranchised persons. And I think that undermines not only Christian commitments but significant civic values and interests. Ultimately an approach rooted in human rights championed by Catholic commitments must both reduce the need to migrate and protect those compelled to do so as a last resort.

During his first people visit outside Rome to Lampedusa, Pope Francis commemorated the then 20,000 African immigrants who had died over the past 25 years trying to reach new life in Europe. His homily there within sight of the graveyard of wrecks noted the pervasive

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idolatry that facilitates migrants' deaths and robs us of the ability to weep. He lamented a globalization of indifference and international structures that treat migrants as pawns on a chessboard. I don't know if you all remember this; I found this incredibly moving. So the altar was made of pieces of the shipwrecked books, boats rather, the chalice. I mean, there was so much symbolism in the ritual, not just the word.

But I was mostly moved that he repented. He didn't condemn the world out there, but he repented. He admitted even he himself remains disoriented. He said "Forgive us, Lord, for being so closed in on our own well-being in a way that leads to anesthesia of the heart." At the border Mass that he celebrated in Juarez two years ago, he also spoke of "tears that purify our gaze, and enable us to see the cycle of sin into which we often have sunk. Tears," he said, "that can soften our hardened attitudes and open us to conversion."

I think also Pope Francis reminds us that sin is not merely a private transaction. He highlights the impact of social sins through our participation in harmful structures. So whether in forms of cultural superiority or profiteering, social inducements to personal sin in the immigration context abound. And I think social sin can help us see how powerful narratives casting immigrants as takers are connected to collective actions or inaction, like votes on the Dream Act in Congress.

So portraying immigration through a lens of individual culpability obscures these multilevel dynamics at play. At a more subtle level than overt xenophobia, I think a consumerist ideology shapes citizens' willingness to underpay or mistreat migrant laborers directly or indirectly through our demand for inexpensive goods and services. A preoccupation with having over being can impede solidarity with immigrants, then, as much as distorted nationalism. It shapes loyalties, frames questions, informs votes. I've actually been struck, preparing both of our sons for First Reconciliation, that these more social dimensions of sin so seldom register in our rights and on our radar.

Pursuing the common good must also robustly engage women, particularly given the feminization of poverty and of migration across the globe. As unaccompanied women undertake these journeys in increasing numbers, today we have about half of migrants worldwide are women. They face unique threats from sexual assault by smugglers and officials, to harassment on the job, to manipulation in detention facilities. Less likely to qualify for employment-based immigration than men, the majority of migrant women work in unregulated jobs in the informal sector.

Whereas undocumented immigrants earn lower wages than citizens in the same job, women routinely earn less than their male counterparts. Undocumented women are often perceived by predators as perfect victims. They remain isolated, uninformed about their rights, and they're presumed to lack credibility. So women farm workers, for instance, often hide their gender with bandannas and baggy clothing. 80% of women of Mexican descent working in California's Central Valley report experiencing sexual harassment as opposed to 50% of all women in the U.S. workforce who experience at least one incident.

So beyond well-founded fears that reporting abuses will result in job loss and then family separation via deportation, such women also lack access to legal resources and face cultural pressures and language barriers. Many also just still remain indebted to their coyotes, to

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their smugglers. And so they understand that immigration officials collaborate with law enforcement, oftentimes so they rarely seek help from the latter.

Today we have over 16 and one-half million people in the U.S. living in mixed-status families. And in the aftermath of detention or deportation, these families face major instability with documented poor health and behavioral outcomes for the children. So in spite of immigrants' courage and resilience, many of these patterns obscure their full humanity as spouses, as parents, and children. Families comprise our most intimate relationships. And so policies that undermine family unity really frustrate this core relationality and harm the common good.

So beyond a critique of economic idolatry, the sanctity and the social mission of the family indicate how conditions that perpetuate family separation really undermine the common good. So enforcement raids or deprivation of stable work opportunities really impede immigrant families' access to social goods. And I would say these are real threats to family values despite the narrow construal of that term, often in our political and religious rhetoric.

So migrant women's experiences of assault on the move, together with disruption to family life, exposed patterns at odds with Christian commitments to human rights and the sanctity of family life. So again, if the Good Samaritan parable attunes us to see the face of immigrants and these women at Casa Nazaret, we're reminded that migration decisions are rarely personal choices alone. A migrant woman's decision to abandon her children for better long-term prospects for them, or to have relations with another male migrant to ensure safe passage or to work without documents, occur within constrained social contexts. These means are not morally or otherwise desirable.

But understanding the realities shaping these choices, I think shows us the shortcomings of individualistic paradigms. They highlight the inadequacy of approaches that flatly criminalize. So "what part of illegal don't you understand?" that type of approach. So in closing, talking points that highlight scarce resources, scheming lawbreakers, or demographic threats, fail to register the social contexts that compel migration and its harmful consequences, ruptured family lives, border deaths, gender-based violence.

Christian understandings of economics, human rights, the social mission of the family, issue a prophetic immigration ethic. And so I think in contrast to reductive sound bites and fear mongering that dominate our airwaves, pursuing justice in terms of the common good reorients these political questions.

Migrant deaths in the Arizona desert and the Mediterranean alike, make poignantly clear the stakes of nations failing to understand themselves as collectively responsible for these challenges. I would say U.S. migration policy should consider its complicity in generating migration flows, rather than perpetuate amnesic scapegoating.

A retreat from short-sighted and enforcement-only approaches should entail policy steps toward long-term solutions, offering undocumented immigrants a viable path to citizenship with a clean DACA reinstatement in the interim, if needed. Certainly the common good tradition swims against significant cultural tides beyond anti-immigrant sentiment.

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Ideological polarization, moral privatism, each of which I think hardens resistance to communitarian claims.

So the all-American credo that we "pull up our boot straps and make our own fate" is as entrenched as it is incompatible with a solidaristic idea that we share each other's fate. A culture in which good fences make good neighbors, either due to isolationist fears or on our campuses to intellectual weariness, significantly hinders deliberate engagement about common goods. Where fear of the other, again, is easy to replicate or a mass market, I think understanding across difference can be harder to come by and engender.

So I just want to close with a couple of signs of hope in that regard. First, Pope Francis's ongoing witness to encounter and solidarity. Beyond his powerful personal witness returning from Lesbos with refugee families or washing the feet of Muslim, Hindu, and Copt refugees on Holy Thursday, in his historic address to the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis talked about immigration here in our own national context.

And he summoned listeners to something far less radical than kinship. He did not ask my advice. He talked about the Golden Rule, if you remember, right. He identified as a fellow descendant of immigrants from a shared content, and asked us to identify with the needs and dreams propelling immigrants traveling north. And with characteristic directness, he asked, "In a word, if we want security, let us give security. If we want life, let us give life. If we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities." I think his abiding solidarity with immigrants and unwavering attention to these ideologies that inhibit our kinship offer us a way forward.

I would also say his dialogue with what he calls the "existential extremities" are a good model. He really prefers bridges to walls. But he's also talked a lot about a self-referential Church giving way to a street-bound Church. He's less risk averse. And I think talking about immigration ethics is fraught with risks. You can take my word for it. It risks making conversation partners uncomfortable, whether in terms of racial dimensions of inhospitality, naming sin, disrupting privilege. But I think he's really concerned that we not get preoccupied with safeguarding against risk. I think some of his appointees have also been prophetic on this issue, whether Bishop McElroy insisting we must all be disruptors at the U.S. regional World Meeting of Popular Movements last February, or Cardinal Tobin accompanying a New Jersey grandfather to his ICE hearing last March.

We might also think just of religious institutions offering sanctuary, whether in their educational settings or in their parish halls. So pursuing the common good, I think, entails illuminating these structures that harm and these internalized ideologies that conceal. But it's not just fake news, but distorting echo chambers or our segmented social media feeds that complicate this task. Because I think beyond manipulative narratives, a sense of real and perceived loss and accompanying grief and resentment foster receptivity to this exclusionary rhetoric and measures.

So I think addressing not just nativism or debating rhetoric, debasing rhetoric, but also deeply-seated fears has to be part of our path forward. And there goes the neighborhood. Ali Noorani captures the unexpected nature of the challenge immigrant activists faced in recent legislative battles. Most waged a political battle, attempting to change minds with

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data and neglected to appreciate that the country was having a cultural debate about identity and values.

I was struck reading his book recently that this first-generation Pakistani-American raised in Santa Cruz and admittedly not very religious, perhaps models this culture of encounter in some of his efforts and response. He goes and he meets with peach farmers in South Carolina, sheriffs in Utah, Texas businessmen, seeking to forge common ground. And he writes, "we need to be able to meet people where they are, but not leave them there."

I think given the deepening tribalization of partisanship, the need to rebuild public trust, and a shared sense of community, cannot be underestimated or bypassed. But finally, I think being prophetic in today's culture might simply entail the risk of sharing our stories and speaking out. So I'd like to offer testimony from a recent graduate of my former university, Jose Arreola, who spoke out on Public Radio a few summers ago.

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

Jose Arreola:

"We had to decide whether we were going north or south to get into California. My friend decided it would be best to go south to avoid the big snowstorm up north. But south would take us through Arizona. I really, really didn't want to go through Arizona. I got more and more nervous. I felt paralyzed. My friend kept asking me what my problem was. And finally I told him. I'm undocumented. I came to the United States when I was three with my family. And Arizona had just passed a law that gave police officers the authority to check people's immigration status. If we got stopped in Arizona, I could be detained and deported.

My friend is white. He comes from a really privileged, upper-class background. He attended a private high school, then Santa Clara University with me. I went on scholarship. Politically, he sees things a little differently than I do. We've had our disagreements. He was quiet for a while. Then he barraged me with questions. I answered the best I could. Silence again. Then he told me about his grandfather. How he hadn't been able to find work in Ireland so he decided to hop on a fishing boat and get off in New York. He worked as a janitor without citizenship. Now his son, my friend's father, is a high-ranking bank executive.

The whole time through Arizona, my friend drove, like, 50 miles an hour. He didn't even want to change lanes. He told me he wasn't going to lose his best friend. He wasn't going to let that happen. The immigration debate became real to my friend in the car that day. We had a very different conversation than the one politicians are having right now. The minute actual undocumented immigrants are included, the conversation always changes. Now I'm completely open about my status. I'm still afraid, conversations don't always go well, and it's always a risk. But as long as I remain in the shadows, I will never really get to know you. And you will never really know me. With a perspective, this is Jose Arreola.

[END PLAYBACK]

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Dr. Heyer:

So Jose's courage, together with the resilience of so many others, witnesses to enduring hope. Christians are called to live in anticipation of a New Heaven and a New Earth and cooperate with the abundance of life already inaugurated. Taking the migrant side as our own, challenges us with implications for political reforms, ecclesial practices, even university pedagogies. Amid the pervasive misinformation that clouds the exploitation of immigrants, a Catholic ethic of kinship across borders offers guideposts on the journey from exclusion to solidarity. We who are settled must remember that even remaining adrift in a sea of indifference is a privilege. Thank you.

[Applause]

Participant: I learned last weekend the cost of deporting one person. And I want to check with you that it was \$12,000 or something like that to deport one person. And with a society that's so geared to money and capitalism, we also should express how much money we're spending to get rid of good people, and how much they would have contributed to our country to begin with.

Dr. Heyer: I think that's right. I think this economic threat frame really flattens all of those realities, as you point out. So not only are we spending all this-- we're going to build a new GEO facility, I think, in Texas it is. There was a hunger strike at that one in California because of the conditions just this summer. But the deportation costs are really high, too. That's right.

Also the deportation practices, I mean, often you spend time in Nogales which is this point of deportation. And often spouses are separated deliberately or folks maybe who are coming from Northern Triangle Central American countries are still deported to Nogales. So there's a cost factor in that there's also kind of an ongoing dehumanization, I think, even in those practices and procedures. Yeah, you would think as a cost-saving mechanism. And economists typically agree on the net benefit to the economy.

I think reading this... my last slide is gone. Reading Noorani's book was interesting to me, to consider how even if those economic arguments are foolproof, if in the end getting the arguments right is necessary, it's insufficient, right? That if resistance is really at a level of a visceral fear or non-rational factors, then that only can be part of the solution, it seems to me. Thank you.

Participant: Professor, I have a question about intersections between the immigration debate, if you want to call it that, and movements that we've seen in our country around Black Lives. I found that there, people have contrasting perspectives on the two. And in my mind, I see them as deeply connected. But I was just curious if you had any thoughts about those two discourses coming together at our present country moment. It's usually when you talk about the policies of Donald Trump.

Dr. Heyer: [Inaudible] Thank you for the question. Yeah, I'm not sure what you have in mind by contrasting perspectives. One guess would be sometimes people pit against one another. Like in terms of scarcity of low-wage jobs, there's attempts to kind of say, your

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rights are really at odds. There's a zero-sum game in terms of how many people we can employ. Or you see in certain industries vertical integration. Like in poultry manufacturing they'll have race-specific levels without any horizontal, you know, "Don't talk to each other or that could be dangerous," in terms of rights demanded.

I, however, as you can probably tell, see more of a common cause. If we're honest about ways in which race has significantly shaped anti-immigrant sentiment in our country's history and present. And also, I'm just increasingly convinced undocumented immigration or this double society is emerging as one of the major civil rights kind of struggles of our era.

And so I was really kind of chilled to hear the chant I included from the White Lives Matter march because that's such an overt conflation of the two. Sometimes there have been dog whistles or a coded language or-- but it made me think, at least for this vocal group, that there is permission to kind of conflate the two.

And so I think the flip side of that, the more hopeful side of that, could be a real coming together, as you said, in intersecting ways, to celebrate different dimensions of our country, to understand what it means to be American in ways that are not ascriptive or an ethnocentric nationalist narrative. And some interesting empirical studies show you survey African-American and Latinos, they have a pretty different understanding and a higher capacity to hold diversity and national identity together without a flattening melting-pot idea. And also just to join in common cause for protection of human rights, frankly, and in the case of just parallel struggles. Is that get what you're asking? Great, thank you.

Participant: Thanks very much, Kristin. I thought that was excellent. And to a certain extent, I think you're probably preaching to a good choir. And I'm part of that, a baritone. But I was having lunch one day with another colleague here at Boston College shortly after the DACA decision had come out by Trump. And he said, "Citing Catholic Social Teaching, every nation has a right to sovereignty and therefore Trump is perfectly in accord with Catholic Social Teaching. And he referenced Pope Pius XI.

And I countered with the Bible about the widow, the orphan and the alien. But the takeaway for me was that Catholic Social Teaching, I think, too, can be cherry picked. And I don't know if there's a strategy that you have for dealing with that or if this is the way we're going to be doing our cherry picking.

Dr. Heyer: I think that's really a relevant concern. I think certainly, so Catholic Social Teaching talks about the rights of nations to control their borders, this right to sovereignty. The challenge is it's not an absolute right, right? So if there are major human rights violations, it becomes relativized. And I do think there's a disservice in the lack of clarity in some of our documents that simply list the right to not have to migrate, the right to migrate, the rights of nations to control their borders, because they can seem incommensurate. I mean, they can really seem in tension.

And I think that tradition wants to put hospitality and sovereignty in relationship or the tradition wants to say when you're part of the problem, you have duties and justice. Or when you have a carrying capacity to accept refugees fleeing violence and you can feed your own members within your borders, then you have a right to respond.

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But I agree with the tension you're raising because I think simply listing these as commensurate principles leads to that cherry-picking problem. I had a second thought that has flown away. I think that tradition needs to be more clear on that. I also think a lot of our pastoral language centers around hospitality, which is admirable. But hospitality really sets this, I fear, in a charitable, optional, noblesse oblige, kind of largesse category.

And as you can see, I would like to talk in terms of duties and justice. And I think that's a little harder to cherry pick. I mean, I think also there are misunderstandings that the Catholic tradition must want open borders. And we want closed borders. I would say the Catholic Social Tradition sanctions porous borders. And then we can have conversations about criteria and, and balancing goods. But I think you're right, that the people with the loudest voice can say, "I found a pope to justify my stance."

Participant: Kristin, thank you very much for bringing the presentation. I was noticing how you invited us to let ourselves be transformed by the encounter with the other, whether it is in the case of Jose or the persons you met. And you propose that as the way forward. Now, do you agree with me that what we experience is, in our world today, exactly the opposite?

We are more and more closed in compartments, whether it is with social media where we interact with those who are like us or think like us, or in the places where we live, our neighborhoods, our schools, et cetera. So if this is the goal and this is what really is helping us to be believers, to be disciples, how can encounter the other? What can help us? What do you suggest that might be helpful for us in this world that is as it is, live the Gospel, seeing the other?

Dr. Heyer: Thank you. I really do think that's the precise challenge and the solution, and I recognize it's completely inefficient to say facilitate widespread encounter across difference. I just don't think we can bypass it. Like, I don't think getting the economic arguments right has worked. The title "There Goes the Neighborhood" is a reference to there are still many people who assume that when immigrants move into a neighborhood, there goes the neighborhood, how to overcome that.

I think you're also naming how it's gotten even harder, right? We're surrounded by people we can kind of privatize our schools and our parks. I mean, we don't have to interact with people who are different from us increasingly in our civic lives, and it's really magnified by these segmented social media feeds. I just really see that in parenting and teaching in this past election to extreme levels.

And I think sometimes in talking to folks across the country, they'll maybe say, "Well, I do know," take Jose, for instance, "he's an honest worker, he helped with my kitchen renovation, but it's just him. The rest of them are just out to kind of take our jobs. They can't kind of..." So it's not a superficial encounter. It has to be kind of a sustained, meaningful encounter. You know, after Jeff Sessions went to Nogales for this troubling speech, if you read it or if you recall it; in my view, the binary language is really dehumanizing.

Bishop Kicanas said, "You know, I wish he had spoken with some of the migrants like at the KBI just over to the Mexico side." Not unlike Pope Francis, kind of showing the three

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dimensionality of this. And to be honest, sometimes I worry that even in Catholic churches, to take an example close to home, we are replicating some of that separate living. Understandably, we have different language Masses. I don't think we should stop that.

But so often you can have communities which one might say, "Wow, here's a social institution that ministers to border patrol and undocumented alike and does bring people across classes together, potentially. And yet they go to the Tagalog Mass, they go to the Spanish Mass, they go to the English-speaking Mass. We were just talking about this in my class earlier today. Never the two shall meet. And even more so, our faith formation tracks now have a Spanish language in it.

So you really don't have to interact across difference even in the social setting of the parish, which could be a countersign the way you're talking. Bishop Gomez was here, I think brought by The Church in the 21st Century about a year ago. And we had a dinner following. And he asked, "What should the Church do differently on immigration?" And a lot of people had ideas. We thought, well, if you're going to ask, we'll tell you.

My favorite idea was from a librarian here. And I'm sorry I don't know her name. But she talked about that PBS show where you have your antiques appraised. What is this called? "Antiques Roadshow." And she said, "What if we had Antique Roadshow in our parishes or other civic groups you could think about, about our immigration stories?"

I loved that idea. What if we started, as simple as, what's your story, like the Catholic Common Ground Initiative, like what brought you here today, what brought you here tonight. I really think it has to start at that human of a level. Because Jose and his Santa Clara roommate, it didn't have to go that way, but they had to kind of go deep into their own personal story for a reorientation.

I don't think it means ship everyone from Capitol Hill to the border. I used to think that. That's why I brought that shoe sole to the pristine halls of Congress. Because I do think there's a disconnect. I think it has to start in our own home communities. But you're right. We can't continue these separate lives, or the encounters never even have to happen. Thank you.

Participant: Can any migration policy that has within it limits regarding the movement of people in any country be compatible with Christianity?

Dr. Heyer: I think so. So there are those who would disagree. But I think policies compatible with the Christian ethic, are well within reason to set limits. I think for instance in this country, Catholic advocacy has prioritized retaining family unity. So there's a lot of talk about departing from that in favor of a merit-based point system.

Or some kind of path to citizenship so that there's not this ongoing exploitative relationship. But I don't think it means completely open borders in every nation. I think it's not just this cherry-picked principle that leads me to say that. But the real value, even in this post-Westphalian world of communities of nations deciding who they are and deciding their, their migration policies, I do think the Christian faith gives us different criteria than we usually see debated on Capitol Hill.

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So I think dignity of those most vulnerable, I think duties in relational justice to people who have already been in families here or contributed in our labor force here. I think historic relationships. So does the U.S. perhaps have a different obligation to countries where its own interventions have been part of refugee destabilizing? So Iraqi refugees, or after the Vietnam War, Vietnamese refugees, or looking at our foreign policy in Central America, or the results of NAFTA in the case of Mexican migrant.

So I do think it's possible to set limits while taking accountability for our role in generating migrant flows. Maybe that's a dissatisfying answer. But I don't think it's all or nothing. I just think every time we start to have a bipartisan conversation about this that security wins the day. I mean, even now the reinstatement of DACA has so many projected stipulations that all have to do with building a wall and militarization and punishment for sanctuary cities and states, that I think those depart pretty quickly from the Christian interests that I was trying to outline here.

Participant: Thank you. I'm in one of those parishes. I pastor a parish with four language groups. And I would agree that they can become silos if you're not careful about it. But I would suggest that multi-language Masses through the years, not on the major feasts because each have traditions around Christmas and Easter and Our Lady's feast that they like to celebrate. But on, let's say, in Ordinary Times so to speak, to bring people together on a Sunday that would involve someone in the community telling their story, and offering a variety of ethnic food after the Mass.

I think people are on their, quote, "best behavior" in church. So they are more open to mingling with those that are just a little bit different than they are.

Dr. Heyer: That's excellent. And I love concluding on a sign of hope. I mean, I think, I think that's exactly right. The East L.A. parish I mentioned with the Guadalupe Homeless Project, where I also have the men who are residents there come and give reflections after a homily. And I think that's really important that we not just do charity, but empower the agency and the sharing of stories across difference. And even, we can all survive a verse of a hymn in a different language. I mean, just there are so many opportunities to open to a different understanding of integration and of identity in the right, or in the liturgy, that I really appreciate that example. And I appreciate ending on a hopeful note. Because I know I began with a lot of signs of despair. Thank you all for coming.

[Applause]