IMMIGRATION IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

KEY PRINCIPLES

01.

Right to Migrate

If it necessary to sustain one's life, a person has a *right* to migrate.

This comes with the *duty* to receive with gratitude the heritage of the host country and contribute to the common good.



The right to migrate is based on the **right to life** (which means that we must also have access to the things necessary for survival and growth) and the **universal destination of goods** (which means that God created the earth for the flourishing of *all* people, regardless of citizenship or where they were born).

02.



Right and Duty to Control Borders

For the security of its people, a country has a duty to control who and what crosses its borders.

03.

Duty to Welcome Immigrants as Able



The right to migrate and the right to control borders can be in tension with one another. To balance these two, the Church teaches that countries are *obligated, to the extent they are able,* to welcome the foreigner.

Pope Pius XII stated that a country's sovereignty "cannot be exaggerated to the point that access to this land is, for inadequate or unjustified reasons, denied to needy and decent people from other nations."

THINKING ABOUT **IMMIGRATION** IN THE CONTEXT OF **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

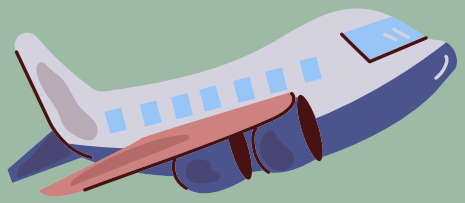
POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

The Catholic Church is not a political party.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are not a political ideology or platform. They come from Scripture and Tradition. Our first allegiance as Catholics is not to a political party but to the Gospel. Politicians and political parties will align with Catholic Social Teaching in some areas but not in others. We need to call out the areas where they stray from the gospel and the true human good.

The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching are a unified whole.

We can't pick and choose which principles of Catholic Social Teaching we like and ignore those that don't align with our preconceived political ideas. Catholic Social Teaching should be a constant call to conversion for every Catholic, so that our lives and our communities will continually become better reflections of Christ.



WHAT ABOUT DEPORTATIONS?

SOME PRINCIPLES:

Custom as Interpreter of Law



Citizens must obey just laws. Customs and enforcement of a law, though, guide how we follow laws. For example, most cities do not enforce the speed limit unless a person is going 5 or 10 miles over the limit. The enforcement tells citizens there is some flexibility in the speed limit.

If police officers started pulling over all citizens tomorrow for going just one mile per hour over the speed limit, this would be unjust after decades of lack of enforcement.

Similarly, for decades, the US has allowed undocumented immigrants to work, pay taxes, and even get driver's licenses in some states, all with little to no enforcement. Overnight enforcement would be unjust.

Family Unity

Immigration policies and their enforcement should favor keeping families together.

The **US Bishops** have called for increased opportunities for family unification, reduced wait times, and legal pathways to citizenship for long-term undocumented residents in the United States who have not committed violent crimes.