

# The Dark Side of the Immigration Debate

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When the clamors finally quieted down, we are still left with what I believe to be the Church's continued support of an illegal policy. I have been troubled by this fact for several years. I keep thinking if the Church is going to support the breaking of any American laws, why not start with the abortion laws which kill about a million unborn babies each and every year. Immigration is trivial by comparison.

One of the residual results of the immigration debate in this country is that it has split churches right down the middle. Many if not more than half of the churches, including the Catholic Church are very sympathetic to the plight of millions of undocumented immigrants.

Personally, I have no trouble with people migrating to this country, no matter where they come from. But we have a legitimate process. My wife of eight years came here from Sicily with her husband and four small children in 1970. They were vetted, tested, and required to wait nearly seven years before they were sworn in as citizens of the United States.

To illustrate the dark side of the immigration coin, there is no better source than Vice-President JD Vance. He has emerged as the most vocal spokesman for the Trump immigration policies when he countered a statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, which had condemned Trump's enforcement of its immigration laws against illegal migrants.

Perhaps, even more importantly are Vance's views on the Church's role in garnering several millions of dollars in federal contracts to serve immigrants over the last decade. He questions whether their motives were for helping the immigrants or their bottom line, which was enhanced by a hundred-million dollars.

The law, which has been constantly maligned and threatened, is the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA), which was promulgated in 1952. When applied to churches, it prohibits them from harboring illegal immigrants without facing serious consequences. Yet many churches actively support undocumented immigrants through various means, including sanctuary cities and alternate aid. Contrary to the specifics of the INA, many churches also harbor illegals, putting them at odds with local law enforcement.

While the Church cautions lawful immigration and the importance of the common good, I see this as nothing more than necessary lip service because I believe the Church in this country favors helping all immigrants, regardless of their legal status.

Most of the recent harm to America and its immigration policies occurred during the Biden administration. Writing for the *City Journal*, Steven Malanga explained *Open Borders* in his essay *How the Catholic Church became a Champion of Biden's Open Borders*. Malanga contends that Church groups grew massively rich with government funding for the controversial immigrant and refugee programs which Trump is now cutting. It now appears that Biden's handling of this crisis marks one of the most corrupt events in our nation's recent history.

Thanks to the government using billions of taxpayer dollars, Catholic Church organizations began running interference for Biden's disastrous Open Borders policies which allowed millions of illegal immigrants to violate our borders. This is contrary to the Church's underscoring the principle of our country's right to control its own borders.

It now appears that much of the Church's involvement here raises a flamboyance of red flags. Early in his second administration, the Church strongly condemned President Trump's cutting of funds and enforcement against illegal aliens and a pause in their government-funded refugee resettlement programs.

The Church, according to Vance had garnered hundreds of millions of dollars in federal contracts to serve immigrants over the last several years. Vance raised a salient question to the bishops when he asked them: *when you receive \$100 million in federal aid to serve immigrants... are they worried about humanitarian concerns or their bottom line?*

Vance also states that the Catholic Church has emerged as one of the largest government contractors. *'In this process the Biden administration and the Church had rapidly expanded its role as a taxpayer supported non-profit but also became one of its chief facilitators of the Biden administration's loose border policy of immigration services...*

Vance also decried the US Conference of Catholic Bishops: *if they are worried about the humanitarian costs of immigration enforcement, let them talk about the children who have been sex trafficking because of the wide-open border of Joe Biden.*

For years, Catholic Charities had admirably served the poor and immigrants. With the growth of the welfare state and its bureaucracy over the past half century, Catholic groups have become government contractors with a personal stake in the process. Funding for refugee resettlement has expanded from over two billion to in excess of 10 billion in 2023. Federal grants increased from under 15 million to over 122 million in 2022. Much of these funds were used to help illegal immigrants, not only beat the immigration system but tap into its funding.

The vice-president also cited the Conference's reduced border enforcement as being responsible for the reported worsening of social problems, such as the sex tracking of children. The vice-president concluded by slamming church leaders on *'Face the Nation'* for *not being good partners in common sense immigration enforcement.*

Migrating to a country by scaling a fence or being smuggled in the trunk of a car are not legal means of immigration. Too many of our churches have taken a blind eye to our laws in favor of helping the poor, no matter how many state and federal laws they may break. To the contrary, the American people should applaud the president for standing tall in the face of bogus immigration laws, which are an insult to the due process of our laws and national sovereignty.