

Pray, But Work from Facts

The story is told of a gentleman who was running late for an important meeting. After circling the block of the building where the meeting was to be convened in 10 minutes, he finally turned to prayer saying, “Oh God, please let me find a parking space and I will give up drinking, go to church and give to charity.”

No sooner did he say his “amen” to that career-saving prayer, than a space opened up and he quickly backed into it. With heartfelt emotion he quickly ran from his car saying, “Never mind. I found one.”

Politicians seek a solution to the current immigration crisis and decide to campaign for comprehensive immigration reform that offers nothing that can be enacted but can still brag, “Never mind. I found one.”

Rather than work for conscience-formed “compassionate” immigration reform we bog down defining “comprehensive” and thereby negate any chance of agreement.

Cruel stalemate follows rather than acknowledging that someone else may be right. Our own axes grind out an agenda that keeps us from seeing, as John Adams observed, how inconvenient facts can be.

Are we willing to listen? Will we accept answers we don’t like? Do we pray that the immigration crisis will end without challenging our beliefs? For immigrants (as distinguished from refugees and asylees and visa holders) can we be persuaded that they are not “free-riders” unworthy of compassionate human respect?

Some of the issues:

1 Refugees flood the jobs market.

Whatever the economic trends, refugees do not flood the job market. Rather, they come fully vetted with valued skills and needed technical abilities. As

Charitably Speaking



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Catholic Charities refines and expands our employment placement programs we build on our work placing refugees in productive employment. Our success rate is always above 90% placement,

usually above 93%, within 120 days of arrival.

2 Immigrants are not employable.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, labor force participation during the recent record setting economic expansion:

- a. White high school graduates: 50% for foreign born; 53% for native born.
- b. Black high school graduates: 70.4% for foreign born; 58% for native born.
- c. Hispanic high school graduates: 72.2% for foreign born; 67.6% for native born.
- d. White bachelor’s degree: 69.5% for foreign born; 72.7% for native born.
- e. Black bachelor’s degree: 82.1% for foreign born; 76.7% for native born.
- f. Hispanic bachelor’s degree: 74.4% for foreign born; 87.7% for native born.

3 Immigrants are more likely to use public benefits than native-born Americans.

Immigrants are no more likely than native-born Americans to use public benefits and most can’t access them for the first five years of residency. During that period, they are likely to become employed.

So if we’re truly seeking a solution to the multi-faceted immigration crisis let’s make sure that we operate only from facts. Prayers will then only seem to go unanswered.

The answer may be “not yet” when an approach not based on American principles is championed or “no” when a proposal does not honor human dignity and respect for new arrivals.

‘Some of God’s greatest gifts are unanswered prayers.’

— Garth Brooks
