

IMMIGRATION MYTHS

Department of Social Concerns, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of St. Cloud

Immigration Sunday, January 3, 2016

Myth: Immigrants take jobs from native-born U.S. citizens.

Fact: Immigrants create new jobs, and complement the skills of the preexisting U.S. native-born work force.

Generally, immigrants do not compete for jobs with the U.S. native-born work force. Rather, they tend to have skills at different ends of the spectrum that complement the preexisting work force, actually creating jobs for both low and high skill employees. The largest wave of immigration to the U.S. since the early 1900s coincided with our lowest national unemployment rate and fastest economic growth. Immigration lends itself to a more productive society and increase in wages across the board. If Minnesota were to remove all unauthorized immigrants, the state would lose "\$4.4 billion in economic activity, \$2.0 billion in gross state product, and approximately 24,299 jobs, according to Immigration Policy Center.

(Source: Labor, Immigration and Employee Benefits Division, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Immigration Myths and the Facts, Behind the Fallacies," <https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/issues/immigration/files/14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf>; American Immigration Council, "Top 10 Myths about Immigration," <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/high-school/top-10-myths-about-immigration>; Immigration Policy Center, "New Americans in Minnesota," http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/new_americans_in_minnesota_2013_2.pdf)

Myth: Undocumented immigrants do not pay taxes.

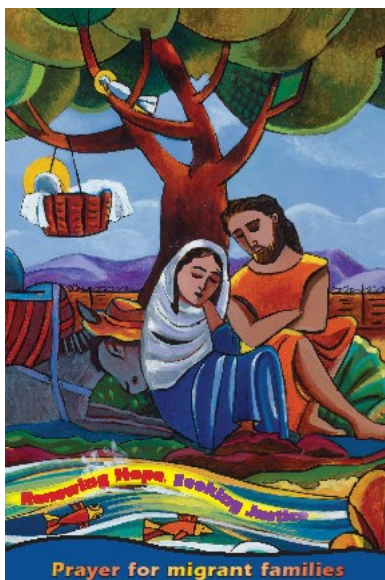
Fact: Undocumented immigrants pay billions of dollars in taxes each year, often for services they never receive.

Undocumented immigrants pay the same taxes that all U.S. citizens pay. Undocumented employees often offer counterfeit identification to their employer, and so have federal income tax, Social Security and Medicare taxes automatically deducted from their paychecks. Undocumented immigrants also pay for goods and services in the communities that they reside in, paying sales taxes as well as property taxes.

(Source: Labor, Immigration and Employee Benefits Division, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Immigration Myths and the Facts, Behind the Fallacies," <https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/issues/immigration/files/14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf>)

*"The Church without frontiers, **Mother to all**, spreads throughout the world a **culture of acceptance and solidarity**, in which no one is seen as **useless**, **out of place**, or **disposable**."*

- Pope Francis



Good and gracious God,

We thank you for the gift of families. We are grateful for all of the joy and love that they bring into our lives, and we ask that you provide special protection for all families, particularly those who face hardships as they move in search of a better life. Show mercy to those who travel in danger, and lead them to a place of safety and peace. Comfort those who are alone and afraid because their families have been torn apart by violence and injustice. As we reflect upon the difficult journey that the Holy Family faced as refugees in Egypt, help us to remember the suffering of all migrant families.

Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, and St. Joseph the Worker, her spouse, we pray that all migrants may be reunited with their loved ones and find the meaningful work they seek. Open our hearts so that we may provide hospitality for all who come in search of refuge. Give us the courage to welcome every stranger as Christ in our midst. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.



Bishop Gerald Kicanas, Diocese of Tucson, offers communion through the border fence to people in Mexico during mass on the border in Arizona on April 1, 2014 (www.axcentral.com)

Myth: Most immigrants cross the border illegally.

Fact: A majority of immigrants have legal status.

Around 75% of today's immigrants have legal permanent (immigrant) visas. Of the 25% undocumented immigrants, 40% overstayed temporary (non-immigrant) visas. In Minnesota, 45.9% of immigrants (or 178,569 people) were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2011, who were able to vote.

(Source: Department of Homeland Security <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/index.htm>; Immigration Policy Center, "New Americans in Minnesota," http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/new_americans_in_minnesota_2013_2.pdf)

Myth: Immigrants are more likely to commit crimes than U.S. native-born citizens.

Fact: Incarceration rates for immigrants are lower than U.S. native-born citizens.

Immigrant communities tend to have a lower crime rate than native-born U.S. citizens, recent research has shown. The incarceration rate of recently arrived immigrants—specifically from Mexico, El Salvador and Guatemala, the three Latin American countries with the highest percentage of immigrants in the U.S.—is the lowest in the nation. Since 1994, as the immigration rate has increased, the overall crime rate in the U.S. has declined by 34.2%.

(Source: Labor, Immigration and Employee Benefits Division, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Immigration Myths and the Facts, Behind the Fallacies," <https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/issues/immigration/files/14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf>; American Immigration Council, "Top 10 Myths about Immigration," <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/high-school/top-10-myths-about-immigration>)

Myth: Immigrants are not assimilating to U.S. culture or learning to speak English.

Fact: Recently arrived immigrants are assimilating at a similar rate to previous waves of immigrants.

Within 10 years of arrival into the United States, 75% of immigrants are proficient in English; the demand for English as a second language classes is rising exponentially, far exceeding supply. To truly judge assimilation, it is unfair to look at the most recently arrived immigrants; rather, one must consider those that have been residing in the U.S. for a longer period of time as they are much more likely to reside above the poverty line and live in the middle class.

(Source: Labor, Immigration and Employee Benefits Division, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Immigration Myths and the Facts, Behind the Fallacies," <https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/legacy/issues/immigration/files/14484immigrationmythfacts.pdf>; American Immigration Council, "Top 10 Myths about Immigration," <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/high-school/top-10-myths-about-immigration>; Justice for Immigrants, "Myths about Immigration," <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/immigration-myths.pdf>)

Myth: The Catholic Church supports illegal immigration.

Fact: The U.S. Catholic Bishops support comprehensive immigration reform.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops support immigration reform that includes: earned legalization, a future worker program, family-based reformed policies, the restoration of due process rights, as well as enforcement that is "targeted, proportional and humane." Further, the Catholic Church supports reform that addresses the root causes of migration, such as underdevelopment and poverty, in order to seek long-term and just solutions.

(Source: USCCB, <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/immigration/churchteachingonimmigrationreform.cfm>)

