

The Poor Still Walk with Us

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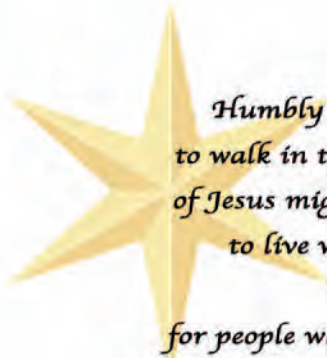
In the past decade, during the period of our rosy economy, we all but invited undocumented workers to come and do the tasks that we didn't want to do, or didn't want to pay someone a fair wage to do. In frivolous moments, I like to imagine our land without undocumented immigrants: restaurants with unwashed dishes stacked on tables, overgrown suburban lawns and hedges straying wildly from their appointed course.

The problems faced by our brothers and sisters from other nations, however are serious, numerous and immediate. Many people, some with whom I have worked in the New Sanctuary Movement, are in imminent danger of being deported. And misinformation and

misconceptions about immigrants taking from the system without contributing to it only confuse an issue that is not simple to begin with.

First and foremost, undocumented immigrants are not an "issue." They are real people painfully facing the break-up of their families due to merciless immigration laws, but the president has announced that he will not act on immigration before next year. Even then, I expect little will change for the better as most of the current administration's rhetoric on the matter is much like that of its predecessor, speaking primarily about enforcement.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, the infant Jesus is, Himself, an immigrant in Egypt for a time after the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and warned him to flee from Herod's wrath. Perhaps that story might prompt us to overhaul the kind of exploitive thinking that has



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dominated our nation's immigration policies since the 1800s,

The prophet [Isaiah](#) exhorts us to "walk in the light of our God" (2:5). Humbly attempting to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, Whose birthday we celebrate this month, might allow us to live the prophet's exhortation and live with greater compassion for people who are poor, disabled, homeless, or immigrants.

For Isaiah tells us that "the way of the just is smooth"... (26:7) and that God "will turn darkness before them into light and tough places into level ground" (42:16). With the prophet's words in mind, we recall that God walks with us always, just as Jesus became human and walked on earth, and that we are called to walk with the least of our brothers and sisters as well.