

## Resisting the Rhetoric of the Moment

*“I don’t know how else to express this besides to point out the obvious — our political scene is garbage. The great commission to abandon the vagaries of spiritual warfare and take up the temporal fight has devolved into a Twitter war . . . If human life is summarized and crowned in the correct choice between Left and Right, if the really important thing is getting, being and staying “woke” — then life is not worth living.”*

*badcatholic.com/2017/09/21/becoming-christian-in-a-political-dump/*

I was struck by the incisive analysis of the blog essay from which the above text comes. The blogger laments that *“our political scene is garbage!”* So too, it seems to this observer that “spin-doctoring” has become outright, bald-faced lying. And name calling along with conspiracy theorizing accompany the lies as the “new normal.” Meanwhile, nothing is getting done! Everything is politicized in the worst possible meaning of the word! Hurricanes, mass shootings, healthcare, bathrooms and who-knows-what-else?

Should we not be concerned, as Catholic Christians, what sort of tone is being set for the future generation? Whether they like it or not, leaders provide a moral example one-way-or-other! But, it seems, morality and values are increasingly displaced by pure, unadulterated pragmatism: If lying will get you what you want then, by-all-means, use the lie! And if calling people names and publically disparaging them will shut down critical discussion, then have-at-it! If striking fear into people’s hearts about foreigners or immigrants helps, then by all means! Everything is now firmly and purely cast in terms of political self-interest: There no longer seems to be a “common good.”

Faith does not allow us to worship at the altar of pure-pragmatism any more than other idols. The Love/Charity at the center of the Gospel message call for stances such as the Share the Journey: USA Migration Campaign of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops which will culminate in this week of “prayer and action.” The following are some talking points about this

campaign:



**Invitation to a week of prayer in support of migrants and refugees:** The September 27 launch of the U.S. campaign, Share the Journey, will be followed in the U.S. by a Week of Prayer and Action (October 7–13) when parishes, schools, universities and other institutions and individuals across the country will join in prayer, education and sharing of information about migrants and refugees to support them locally and around the world.

Jesus tells us to welcome *“the stranger,”* because *“whatever you did for the least of these, you did it for me.”* ---- Persons have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families. The Church recognizes that all the goods of the Earth belong to all people. When persons cannot find employment in their country of origin to support themselves and their families, they have a right to find work elsewhere in order to survive. Sovereign nations should provide ways to accommodate this right. Sovereign nations have the right to control their borders. The Church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories and their borders. However, wealthier nations, which have the ability to better protect and feed their residents, have a strong obligation to accommodate migration flows.

As a Church, we will continue to stand in solidarity with our immigrant brothers and sisters because for us this is not a political issue, it’s a human issue.

We must not lose our sense of charity and our reverence for the human person in the harsh political rhetoric of the day. We must not bend the Gospel to conform to any political ideology.