

## Denver Abp. Chaput on immigration

Michael Sean Winters | Jun. 15, 2009 NCR Today

Denver Archbishop Charles Chaput participated in a forum this past weekend on [immigration reform](#) [1]. This would not normally be news except that the event was hosted by Congressman Jared Polis who is not only pro-choice on abortion he is also openly gay.

The archbishop linked the church's concern for immigrants with its opposition to abortion in a perfectly appropriate manner: "The Catholic commitment to the dignity of the immigrant comes from exactly the same roots as our commitment to the dignity of the unborn child. Any Catholic who truly understands his or her faith knows that the right to life precedes and creates the foundation for every other human right. There's no getting around the priority of that fundamental right to life. But being 'prolife' also means that we need to make laws and social policies that will care for those people already born that no one else will defend." Well said.

The archbishop also acknowledged the differences he had with Congressman Polis in a completely respectful and articulate manner. "I'm pretty confident that Congressman Polis and I would agree that we disagree -- vigorously -- on some very serious social issues," he said. "But those issues aren't on the agenda today. What's on the agenda today is finding a way to make our immigration laws better. We have a mutual interest in that important work -- and I respect the congressman's sincerity and energy in trying to do something about it."

I am at a loss to see how these words are very different from what Holy Cross Fr. John Jenkins said at Notre Dame before introducing President Obama in which Jenkins acknowledged, clearly and without equivocation, that the University of Notre Dame disagrees profoundly with the president on both abortion and embryonic stem cell research. Admittedly, the forum was different, and the university conferred a specific honor on the president. But, the underlying premise -- that while we may have vigorous disagreements with others -- we must nonetheless find ways to collaborate with them on areas where we are in agreement.

As one who has criticized Archbishop Chaput at times, it is especially delightful to be able to applaud his participation in this forum. I am delighted he linked our Catholic concern for the unborn with our concern for immigrants. It is one thing to say that our concern for the unborn is foundational and quite another to say it is our only concern. Archbishop Chaput drew the line exactly where it belongs and deserves credit for doing so.

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[1] <http://www.archden.org/index.cfm/ID/2191>