NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

Immigration reform must be comprehensive to work

Michael Sean Winters | Jul. 21, 2009 NCR Today

This morning's Washington Post has an op-ed on immigration reform [1] that seeks to thwart an effort to move away from "comprehensive" reform and, instead, only establish a path towards regularizing the status of those undocumented workers already here.

Immigration reform stands with health care as the top priorities for Catholics in the current Congress. Not only does justice demand that we enact legal protections for undocumented workers and fix a broken system that has been encouraging foreign workers to break the law, but we are fighting for our own. Most undocumented workers are Latinos and most Latinos are Catholics. Some of the anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from the right puts one in mind of the anti-Catholicism of the Know Nothing Party of the antebellum years.

Reform must be comprehensive. Yes, it is difficult with a struggling economy to anticipate the need for an influx of workers in the near-term. But, the economy will turnaround at some point and the jobs Americans love to hate, and refuse to do, will become in demand again. Additionally, as the article points out, piecemeal reform will not win the backing of those Republicans in Congress willing to enact reform, not will it win the support if the Mexican government, whose good offices will be required if we want the reforms to work.

Immigration reform is an issue on which our polarized American bishops are nearly unanimous. And, if we keep the focus on the barbaric current practice which separates children from their parents and husbands from their wives, immigration reform will be precisely the kind of measure in which faith-based arguments appeal to most centrist voters. The president should move forward with the push for reform, but he should keep that reform comprehensive.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/20/2014 - 21:22*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/immigration-reform-must-be-comprehensive-work

Links:
[1] http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/20/AR2009072002483.html