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# Obama's new immigration policy a step in the right direction

Maureen Fiedler | Jun. 20, 2012 NCR Today

I realized the significance of President Barack Obama's new policy for immigrants who came here as children when I completed an interview with a young man in New York who had been born in Pakistan. He was brought here at a young age. The interview had nothing to do with immigration, but his mind was clearly on his immigration status.

After the interview, I asked him about whether he would return to Pakistan, and he said he would not feel comfortable in Pakistan these days (understandably so: the young man is gay and Muslim) and he wanted to remain here. Then he said, "The president is supposed to announce something important about that today. Do you know if he did?" I was happy to tell him the news, and he was overjoyed.

So were thousands of other young immigrants when they heard Obama's recent decision to permit immigrants who came to the United States as children to apply for a two-year postponement of deportation with the possibility of renewal. It's a change in enforcement policy, not the law. It's late in coming, but it's a step in the direction of justice.

Some of Obama's critics charged that this was a "political" move. It may be partly that, but isn't it nice when politics and justice coincide?

Obama cannot do much more as the president alone. Comprehensive immigration reform or the DREAM Act require the assent of Congress. But right now, it appears the Republicans in Congress are bent on appealing to the anti-immigrant fervor that led to draconian immigration laws in states like Arizona and Alabama.

Whatever happened to the biblical injunction that says we are to welcome the stranger and the alien? I did note that the Catholic bishops welcomed Obama's move. Also a step in the right direction, but more is needed. I wonder how much parish preaching touches this subject. It would certainly seem needed and appropriate.

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