

POPE'S REMARKS ON IMMIGRANTS WELCOME



Bill Donohue comments on remarks recently made by Pope Francis on the immigration crisis facing the United States:

There are those on the right and the left who have misrepresented what the pope has said about the immigration crisis. Understandably, those on both sides of this issue are unhappy with the pope's comments, but that is no excuse for distorting them.

It may not please those on the right to learn that the pope implores Americans to care for children who have crossed the border seeking help. But that is exactly what Catholics are expected to do: to tend to the needs of the dispossessed, regardless of whether they broke the law to get here.

It may not please those on the left to learn that the pope has never said we should encourage illegal migration, or that the U.S. should adopt an open borders approach. But that is exactly what Catholics are expected to do: respect a nation's sovereignty.

It is one thing to condemn racism and xenophobia, which the pope has done, quite another to say that the U.S. should take a laissez-faire attitude toward illegal immigration, which the pope has rejected.

In his statement on July 14, the pope explicitly said that the international community must press those countries involved to "inform the public of the dangers of the trip north and to

promote development of the migrants' countries of origin." That is not exactly the equivalent of admonishing Americans that we need to welcome the world to our shores. Yes, the pope says we need to "help" these people, but he has never said that we need to retain them.

In short, the Catholic way is to treat all humans with equal dignity, independent of their legal status, while at the same time taking reasonable measures to secure our border.

Everyone has a right to disagree with this approach, but no one has a right to caricature what the Holy Father has said.