



# Boston Catholic Journal

Nihil autem nisi Jesu

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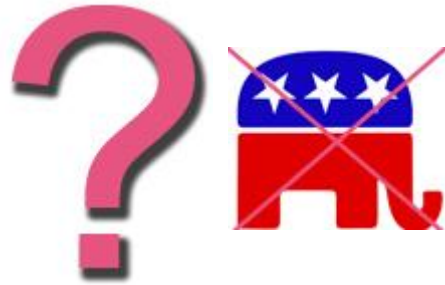


Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

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*“Who am I to judge?”*



## **It appears to Depend on Who ... and the Real Problem of the Refugee Crisis**

**It is, we think, noteworthy** that Pope Francis who famously replied to a question about the *morality* of a homosexual person by answering “*Who am I to judge?*” — does not hesitate to judge not just the *morality* of a presidential candidate, but to go so far as to pronounce him “*not a Christian*” despite his professing to be so. This was a

clear reference, of course, to Donald Trump — but could equally be applied to Marco Rubio Jeb Bush, and Chris Christie, all of whom are unabashedly *Catholic*. If they, too, in light of their common concern for securing the porous borders of America, are, for that reason, "*not Christians*", then, *eo ipso*, they are *excommunicates* — outside of Christ and therefore outside the Church — to say nothing of the *other* Christian candidates as well (Cruz, Carson, Kasich) *who support the same issue of securing America's border with Mexico* — which is the point of influx of virtually all the *drugs* that poison the youth across the country and are indisputably the cause of so much *crime* — *and murder* — in America. Who will contest that?

What is more, *will Catholics who support securing our borders no longer be "Catholics"?* To be unable or unwilling to make a *judgment* on matters moral despite clear Catholic teaching on homosexuality, how can Pope Francis make so audacious a "*judgment*" on the faith in God Himself *in others*? *It is a very troubling and deeply divisive precedent.* Despite the pope's claim, we can think of no reference in *any* Gospel that teaches us to "build bridges instead of walls" — yes, we must love our enemies — but *not* enable them nor encourage them in wrong-doing — even if it is rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's. But in rendering to God what is God's, can *anyone* make that *damning* claim of even the least of His brothers?

You may argue that the pope gave these candidates — *and those who support them* — "the benefit of the doubt" *but the condemnation stands*, does it not, if they *do not* share his own views on matters over which he has no legitimate authority and no ecclesiastical mandate? How do we reconcile Pope Francis's readiness to make such unsparing judgments — to declare a defined body of people in matters *political* as being *separated from God* — with the unfathomable perplexity he demurs from making on a defined body of people in matters *moral* — which Scripture itself and Church teaching condemns? We are confused. We are dismayed. But now, and much more to the point, in light of your pronouncement, we are divided. Or more frightening still, separated in our common faith by uncommon politics.

In a word, is Pope Francis prepared to anathematize the faithful, not through any odor of heresy ... but through the banality of politics? How did it come to this?

**Quo vadae, Francis? Quo vade? Et quare ...?**

## A Painful Perspective on the “Illegal Immigrant” Issue and the Refugee Crisis

While this article focuses on one aspect of securing borders against the poisonous influx of drugs into America through Mexico, another dimension remains — and both concern *people*: people as *immigrants* desperate to flee the violence of a narco-economy that spawns murders and violence on *the south* side of the border, and people as *victims* in families who suffer from the ravage of drugs *north* of the border. The focus is the same: people. Which is the greatest tragedy? Both are. And the common cause of tragedy on *both* sides of the border is the same also: drugs.

The matter of economic opportunity is a complex one that will not be settled by sound-bites. As Catholics we must remember the *real Scriptural mandates* concerning who is our brother and our obligation to help him in his need (Specifically the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* in St. Luke 10. 25-37 Also see St. Matthew 25.35-40, Romans 12.23, Hebrews 13.1, Deut. 10.19 and Leviticus 19.34) — *and our obligation to welcome strangers.*

Inasmuch as Francis deeply erred in making pronouncements on the faith in God of others and declaring them “not Christians”, it nevertheless remains our obligation to welcome strangers and foreigners — and this, we argue, is the intended thrust of Pope Francis's message, however awkwardly delivered. We cannot contest this as Catholics (indeed, as Christians and Jews alike). We were all once foreigners in a strange land, or at least our forbears were. Which, then, is the most vital issue? Welcoming the stranger or securing our borders against drugs and *illegal* immigrants? The answer is not as clear as some would make it to be. Consider the following:

- Are you prepared to open *your own* home to strangers? Can you realistically *afford* to feed and clothe another family? Can you provide them with *medical care* in the event of institutional limitations? Will you give them *transportation* to jobs and other appointments (they will not have cars and many will be unable to obtain a driver's license)? Are you willing and able to provide *Day Care* for their children as parents pursue numerous appointments to acquire citizenship, enroll in classes to learn English, and more classes to obtain job skills — all of which you will likely be required to provide transportation? Will your home insurance cover liabilities that may be

incurred by residents not on your plan, and if not, are you in a position to pay for them out of pocket? Who watches what programs on your television set, and when? Who will have access to your computer (which most of us rely upon) and how often? Can you readily bridge language and cultural differences? Are you prepared to relinquish your privacy? Is your spouse equally committed to these necessities or are they likely to strain your marriage? These are just a few of many other questions likely to arise should you decide to host an immigrant (or illegal immigrant) family or individual. These are terribly *practical* considerations, *no matter how deep your faith*. Are we suggesting that you do not host a family? No. If you can afford it and can accommodate all the obligations and liabilities that come with it, we encourage you to. However, we strongly suspect that the great majority of those who agitate for immigration (legal and illegal) would be unwilling to put their outspoken views into practice by hosting immigrant families. The *concept* of unregulated and unmitigated immigration (from Central America or Syria, to name only a few) is only that — a concept — until real and practical issues are not simply addressed, but capable of being put into practice. What is more, with most families requiring both spouses and parents to work simply to afford a dwelling (*this is the great unaddressed scandal* that is the direct result of the triumph of Feminism which enslaved male and female alike to a workplace and equal opportunity for drudgery) who will be home to provide the transportation and linguistic mediation needed by a hosted family? A much clearer picture emerges when we take practicalities into consideration, despite the depth of our faith. God does not call us to do what is impossible to us. He sees our yearning to help and He sees our very real limitations.

- A country may make the very humane — and Christian — effort to accept and accommodate as many immigrants as possible. The key word here is *possible*. What constitutes the “possible”? Can a country conscionably accept more refugees that it can provide for in the way of housing, welfare, medical care, and education? Must it accept some from another country by depriving others within its own? Can the influx be of such magnitude that the very *national and cultural fabric* that determines it as a country distinct from another (in the way of language, politics, ethos, ethics, and conflicting religions) is subverted and ultimately superseded by the very immigrants it made so great efforts to assist — and who have no cultural affinity with the host country, and no intention of

being adapted to or inculturated by it? It is entirely possible to abolish any country as we now recognize it by outnumbering its native citizens with foreign inhabitants of sufficient number to define it in such a way that it no longer bears the cultural — and national — identity it had historically possessed. We need only look to Turkey as an example of the transition from a once Christian country (the Byzantine Empire) to a Muslim nation, to name just one formerly Christian country that fell to the violent spread of Islam. It is a modern iteration of what is called *Theseus' Paradox*: at what point does a raft, each of whose planks are gradually replaced, become *another* raft altogether different from the *original*? In a democratic country it is entirely possible to use the very means of the democratic institution to vote to *abolish democracy* and institute Sharia law. There is nothing illogical in this argument. We can vote to abolish the very institution used to establish its antithesis. This has always been a problem inherent in democracy: a plebiscite vote to abolish it. What then constitutes “the possible” as more expedient to the “preferable” in the way of determining the possible allowance of immigrants into a country that wishes to preserve its cultural and national identity? National identities are human institutions articulated through cultural affinities. Is the possible dissolution of a country and a culture more acceptable to those within it or to those outside it? Which segment of humanity has the right to exist, and how do you morally determine that? This is especially true of incompatible cultures and religions that cannot coherently — or ideologically — co-exist. There must be a point of saturation beyond which the one or the other predominates: what calculus, then, shall we use to determine the number of refugees/immigrants acceptable, sustainable, in any given country?

How are we, as Catholics, to implement what comes to us as a moral obligation — while sustaining the very Christian mandate that could lead to its being abolished?

Suddenly the question is not as clear-cut as it reflexively appears to be purely on a Christian ethos — does it?

Oh, yes — we have no answers. We only wish you to share in our perplexity ... however doctrinaire your own opinion is.

Editor  
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