

June 12-13, 2010

From the Pastor,

I am proud to report that so far there have been twenty five bags of groceries brought to the parish St. Vincent de Paul Pantry . Thanks from all the people who will be the beneficiaries.

On a totally new subject, there has been a lot of news concerning the upcoming vote in Fremont dealing with immigration issues. It doesn't take any great political analyst to understand why this is all happening. Our nation seems to have totally inadequate immigration services. I am not the expert on this. If you want better information about the questions I am going to raise you might want to contact Fr. Mike McAndrew. He has been working with this issue for years. Some of what I would like to present comes from a brief conversation I had with him a few weeks ago, when he was in Omaha visiting his Mom.

Some of the things we know: Our country is based on immigration. Most of us have grandparents or great grandparents who came from another country. Immigration, when done well, has strengthened our country just like having new parishioners has strengthened Holy Name.

Some of the things some people know: Much of our current economy as a nation, state and city depends on recent immigrants. Our immigration services in the USA are extremely understaffed. I have talked with people who have worked with lawyers for over fifteen years to become citizens and have been unsuccessful even though they have been working legally in this country for that whole time. The main problems are the shortage of staff and the quota system this country has for each ethnic group.

Some of the things that could happen if laws like Arizona is putting in place happens in Nebraska: Families will be split apart because the children can be legal citizens while one of more of the parents are unsuccessful in becoming legal at this time. Many times this means the bread earner is gone and the family is on the welfare roles. People can be stopped in very embarrassing ways just because of their looks. I know how scared I felt once when I was stopped by police because I was driving a car that matched the vehicle in a recent bank robbery. The police were being careful and doing their job. I was a wreck. I can't even imagine if that had happened on one of my trips into non-English speaking countries and I didn't have a guide with me. Fr. Mike says that legal teenage citizens are being stopped on a regular basis in his area. They feel hurt and unwanted. He said behavior does not improve under those conditions. That is one of the biggest recruiting tools for gangs. I can imagine what that would be like in South Omaha.

There is a possibility that clergy and church people could be penalized for helping illegal immigrants. So we are to drive by a hurt person because of their looks and ignore them for we might be penalized for helping them. Landlords are supposed to card people. What if they card one person and find things are okay but they don't realize some of their family might not be legal? Knowing that they could be penalized for this would they just stop renting to certain people because of their looks? Personally I prefer the way we treat people at Holy Name . I just hope it will not become illegal to be a Christian. Please read the enclosed OTOC letter for more information on a prayer campaign concerning this issue. The LEAST we can do as Catholics is to pray about how this affects our neighbors.

God bless you,
Fr. Frank