



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop
Michael Jackels

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Refugees, human dignity and the common good

One of the mission priorities for the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to enhance the experience of the Sunday assembly for Holy Mass. The hope is for that experience to transform the participants, spiritually speaking, who as a consequence will be agents of transformation in the world.

The Sunday assembly for Holy Mass is not the be-all and end-all of the practice of our Catholic religion.

Sunday Mass is supposed to have an effect on life outside of church, on weekdays, wherever we live our lives, in response to issues.

When the teachings of Jesus are applied to concrete issues, the result is a whole area of Church teaching on social justice.

Two key principles of Catholic social teaching are respect for human life and dignity, and respect for the common good. These principles lead the Church to take stands and action on the issues of the day, such as: abortion; physician-assisted suicide; immigration; and religious liberty.

For example, Catholics believe a government has the right and duty to secure its borders, but also to carry out a reasonable policy to admit refugees and immigrants.

Catholics also believe that people have a right to emigrate when the essentials for dignified living – food, shelter, productive work, fair wages, education, health care, and protection from harm – are not available in their own country.

And Catholics would see it as a threat to everyone's religious liberty if Christian immigrants were allowed in, while Muslim immigrants were refused out of hand.

As Catholics we will be led by Catholic social teaching to take clear stands and decisive action in defense of human life and dignity, and of the common good.

And if doing so puts the Catholic Church at odds with elected officials who sign executive orders and enact laws that are unjust... so be it. We will accept the consequences.

It would be a hard defense to make before God, if we were to depart from the teaching of Jesus and his Catholic Church, to be led instead by a political party, especially when as a result we would be led astray on issues of life and death, of human dignity and rights.

So, go to Sunday Mass, and participate fully, consciously and actively, allowing the experience to transform you, and prepare you to be an agent of transformation in our country, making it a different, better, more just place for all to live, including refugees and immigrants, regardless of their religion.

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