

## **BULLETIN – FEBRUARY 5**

**We extend our condolences** and promise of prayers to Andy and Sheila Marzolf and their family as they mark the death of Andy's mother, **Carol Marzolf**, who died in Novi on January 10. We also extend our prayers to Tom and Steve Barnes of AAA Sales on Broadway Avenue on the death of their dad, **John Barnes**, on January 21. John was buried from St. Mary's in Marne. He and his crew have helped us here at SS. Peter & Paul with many carpet and floor covering needs over the years, and we are very grateful for their thoughtful service.

**We're wide open** to further fact-checking on this, but here's a report coming in from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. You'll recall that a very few years ago, Juárez, right across the border from El Paso, was considered one of the most dangerous cities in the world. Two opposing drug cartels were battling it out in the streets of that city to control the drug pipeline into the U.S. In 2010, this city of 1.3 million suffered an agonizing 3,766 homicides, many of them women and children caught in random acts of violence and terror. In 2013, the people of a desperate city parish right along the border begged missionaries who were known for establishing Perpetual Adoration chapels to open one in their parish. They had one open in three days.

One woman recounted that shortly after that, with the city still under siege, she was walking on her way to the chapel for her hour of adoration at 3 a.m. Soldiers stopped her in the street, asking her where she was headed when everything was closed. She replied, "Come and see." When they got to the chapel, they found six other women inside, engaged in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The lady who brought the soldiers turned to them and said, "Do you think *you're* protecting *us*? We're praying for *you*, 24 hours a day!" One of the soldiers broke down in tears, still holding his weapon. The next night, the women saw him come to the chapel in civilian clothes at 3 a.m., making his Holy Hour and "crying oceans of tears."

By 2015, the total number of murders in Juárez had dropped to 256. The pastor of the desperate border parish reported that for two months after the chapel had opened in 2013, not a single person had been murdered in that neighborhood. The number of seminarians in the diocesan seminary had dropped to eight, and the seminary was going to close. After the Adoration chapels opened, the number of students has increased to **88** (!) – many of whom have had their vocations formed by praying at the chapels.

Jesus, the Lord of Life, our Good Shepherd, comes into our midst so that we "may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). Ciudad Juárez had no place to go but to Jesus. What has happened to that city in a few short years is nothing short of a Eucharistic miracle. If you're still looking for life anywhere else: WHY?

**Are we strong enough** to have a *good* immigration policy? One that doesn't seek to be vindictive, or pit haves against have-nots, or slam the door on people who can truly contribute to our society? Our new Administration has accomplished a good deal in its first couple of weeks, particularly in defense of human life. Now we must continue to be aware of what being pro-life means in its extended sense, and vigilant in looking after the welfare of *all* God's people. Nations might be defined in part by "us" and "them." There can be no such designations in the Church, the Body of Christ.

There is no need to ignore laws, nor to ignore the offense of ignoring the laws protecting entry into our or any other country. There are plenty of people who have been patiently waiting in line to do things the right way; while others have come in ahead of them, for moral reasons or not, and helped to create an atmosphere of mistrust among both citizens and the immigrant community. How to resolve these problems and seek an equitable immigration procedure when millions of people are involved? How to secure justice for the oppressed and a nation where the rule of law is respected and enforced for the good of all?

Proper and secure borders should be no more offensive to peoples than discipline and law are to the individual, even within the family. We all require limits in order to thrive. We should seek to have genuine justice as a priority, particularly as it involves the unity and strength of families. As one element of working toward a solution, perhaps all those who are in the country illegally should be invited to report their presence and status to a designated government agency or office within 90 or 180 days. Those who report—and this admittedly would take trust and confidence that the government could only reward by demonstrating it—could be provided an official I.D. and placed at the bottom of the priority list for deportation. Those who do not report, who do not carry the I.D., **and** (to avoid fraud) who do not have their names in the central registry, would be subject to immediate deportation upon discovery for any purpose or reason. The latter would likely include those who are guilty of crimes or fraud or who have other reasons to fear reporting.

After “RE-port or DE-port” would go into effect, those who have reported could enhance their status by showing that they are part of a family unit, by demonstrating that they have a job, by proving some proficiency in the English language, by being actively enrolled in school, by having a citizen officially sponsor their residency, or by some other means agreed upon by the legislators. The “path to citizenship” should still place those who have come here illegally behind those who are duly following the legal process; but even those whose first act in the U.S. was breaking the law to get in could earn points against deportation by demonstrating their value to the country. Special consideration should be given to those who cooperate with the process, who have been here for many years, and who are now truly disabled and in need of medical assistance. Again, there should be ways for people to enhance their status, short of total amnesty or granting of privileges ahead of those who have observed and respected the law. Perhaps boards of local citizens, similar to the old Selective Service boards, could be established to assist in the process of judging the merits of individual cases. To not be considered adversarial, such boards should always include citizens of the same ethnic (or linguistic or religious) background as those whose cases are under review. Witnesses could be welcomed to help state the case in favor of (or opposed to) leniency in each case coming up for review.

Immigration—the movement of peoples—is never just a political issue. The Church has always been deeply involved in it because of the human needs involved, and because of the need for principles of justice and equity in dealing with the souls of God’s people. President Obama was, it seemed, always wont to remind us Americans that most of our ancestors came here from many lands and many continents. What he so often overlooked in his oratory was the simple point that most of them had followed the legal process in order to do so; and that *that*, rather than the simple fact of immigration itself, was the point of contention. No nation of scofflaws will long survive—but neither will a

nation that demonstrates no compassion for or interest in those who are anxious to invest their own talents in the opportunities they see and seek. God bless you!

Fr. Den

**Thought for the week:** “The good is never more fittingly defended than when it is defended with passion” (St. Thomas Aquinas).