



JustFaith webinar:

Dignity Denied: Responding to the Immigration Crisis

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<https://www.amazon.com/Dignity-Justice-Welcoming-Stranger-Border/dp/162698381X>
<https://orbisbooks.com/products/dignity-and-justice>

Mary, Un-doer of Knots



There are only Four Roads to Migrate to the U.S. to live long-term

Family-based migration (limited to 226,000 people per year)

This is what opponents call “chain migration.” (wait in your country for your turn – sometimes decades).

Employment-based migration (limited to 140,000 persons per year, available to highly skilled workers with corporate sponsors).

The diversity lottery (50,000 persons per year).

Humanitarian relief (which includes asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), T-visas and U-visas). Very tight time limits on these. ex. Asylum is one year from arrival.

That's it. If a person in distress does not qualify under one of these roads, they can try to fly in on a tourist visa and overstay, or sneak in at the border. Life then means hiding.

What are NOT paths to permanent residency?

- **Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals:** An **executive action** by President Obama in 2012. ***DACA was never US law.*** It deferred deportation in exchange for a short-term work permit. It never included a path to long-term residency. Courts have repeatedly ruled it exceeded president's authority.
- **Temporary Protected Status:** A short-term status in the discretion of the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security for periods of six to 18 months, due to emergency conditions in home country. ***Was always meant to be temporary.*** The Trump administration announced intention to **end TPS** for Honduras, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Cameroon, Nepal, Venezuela and Haiti. [Estimated **1.1 million TPS holders** in US today]
- **Non-Immigrant, *short-term* work permits:** No path to long-term residency. Workers must leave the country when the work period ends.

What doesn't matter under the law in an undocumented person's request to stay?

- I have lived here for many years and have never gotten in trouble.**
- I have US-born children.**
- I am a good person.**

What about all the undocumented folks living in the U.S. now?

- **10 to 12 million** people currently live in the U.S. without legal permission (per Pew Research Center). Living in hiding. In mixed-status families....
- The Trump administration has announced its intention to **deport them all**. The “**Big Bill**” will make this feasible.....
- Legal protections (one of the four roads) exist for only a **small fraction (estimated at 10%)** —everyone lives under the constant threat of deportation.
- Incidentally, between 2005 and 2019, refugees and asylees contributed \$123.8 billion to the U.S. economy. In L.A.
- County in 2019 alone, they paid \$9.6 billion in federal taxes and \$5 billion in state and local taxes.

Tuesday July 15, 2025: What immigrants saw as they entered the federal building in downtown Los Angeles to attend an immigration court hearing



Who enforces deportation and what changes are we about to see?

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the primary agency responsible for deportations.

ICE today has only ~20,000 employees, including law enforcement, attorneys, and support staff.

National Guard and Marines called up in Los Angeles for show of force.

Elsewhere, State, local police agreed to assist in immigration enforcement under INA Section 287(g) agreements. **826 police forces have signed agreements as of 7/16/2025.**

Real Time Changes in Immigration Enforcement

The “Big Bill,” passed by Congress two weeks ago added \$170.7 billion to immigration and border enforcement over a multi-year period.

\$45 billion will be spent on expanding detention facilities to increase the number of detention beds to 116,000 (close to double). The administration announced this week their intention to eliminate bond for people going through the immigration court system.

\$29.9 billion is designated for ICE enforcement and deportation operations including hiring more ICE agents and expanding removal capacity.

On June 23, 2025, without explanation, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the administration to deport migrants to third countries, with which they have no relation, when they cannot be removed to their own countries.

The “Big Bill” added costly fees immigrants must pay to apply for asylum and work permits, which most newly arrived migrants cannot afford.

THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN FUNDING FOR DETENTION AND DEPORTATION CAPACITY, AND REFLECTS AN EXTREMELY HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD MIGRANTS.

What led to the problem? Confusing term “Asylum”

- Most desperate people who come to the southern border seek “asylum,” without knowing what is required to qualify for asylum.
Most do not qualify.
- Asylum as a *legal status* was created after WWII to address needs of millions of displaced people.
- To qualify, a person must **prove** they fear (or were already) severely “persecuted” in their home country, **and** the persecution was “**because of**” their **race, religion, national origin, political opinion** or **social group**.
- Persecution *for any other reason* does not qualify.
- Reasons other than persecution (like war, famine, lack of work, do not qualify.
- Must also prove they can’t relocate within country and police ‘ help them.

The historic asylum process: *come in and wait while your case is in process*

- Under the system in effect since 1980, people walked up to a border crossing, flew in on a tourist visa or were intercepted having crossed the border, and asked for asylum.
- They were administered a “**credible fear**” **interview**, simply to determine if their **fear** of persecution was credible.
- If found “credible,” they were often released into the U.S. to await a hearing on their asylum claim in immigration court.
- The backlog of claims in immigration courts is currently 3.8 million cases (1.8 million asylum claims), per data from TRAC Reports (Syracuse).
- This allowed people to stay for years, waiting for hearing.

What angers immigration opponents most about the current system?

- *People sneaking in are perceived as cheaters who don't follow the rules.*
- *People who formally ask for asylum and lose, don't leave.*
Ultimately, many people cannot prove persecution or persecution ***because of*** one of the five specified categories.
- When their asylum hearings come – if they get that far, they cannot prove persecution because of a permitted reason, they are ordered deported.
- But, people often do not leave. They lose work permission but stay anyway, living in fear, under the radar.
- This situation, and the impression that more and more people are coming to the U.S., is a heavily motivating Republican issue.

What is the Way Forward? What Can I do?

- The administration is taking many actions that are not legal and will eventually be struck down (rounding up people without “reasonable suspicion,” plain clothes, masked agents grabbing people on the streets.)
- **But, U.S. law *allows much of what the administration has planned*, including the removal of all people living here without permission. *And now, they have the money to do it.***
- The law permits the U.S. President to decide how many refugees to allow into the country in any given year.
- **There is deep pain ahead.** The administration is not showing any signs of backing down.
- The **ONLY WAY** to change the situation is for Congress to change the law. How long will we tolerate Congress refusing to reform immigration law?

This Sounds Hopeless. What Can I *really* do?

The single most important thing you can do is to **call, write and confront your own congress people** and **demand that they change the law to accommodate migrants**, and stop the administration's plan to deport 12 million people. Tell them that if they do not do this, you will work to vote them out of office in 2026. Support candidates in other jurisdictions financially.

You can also speak up – we will continue to see people suffer and be thrown out of the country as long as this administration is in power. ***Is this too difficult to discuss in your social circles? In your church? Has your pastor ever preached on the Church's teaching on migration?***

Where do you stand?

And He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. . . He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. . . Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me you accursed. . .

for I was a stranger and you gave me no welcome. . .Matthew 25:31-46

