



‘The Living Vein of Compassion’

Bishop Mark J. Seitz, DD

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The “border” is often more porous than commentators make it out to be. “People cross every day to be with family, to work, to trade, and to worship. Some of my Catholic schools might have to close if students from Ciudad Juárez, our sister city in Mexico, weren’t able to cross,” Bishop Seitz notes. For you or your loved ones, is the border a lived reality or an abstract concept? How does that affect your approach to border issues?
2. Seitz acknowledges that we need “effective systems of management, more robust asylum protocols, mechanisms for security and order, and legal channels to mitigate irregular migration.” Do these qualifications muddle the Church’s moral witness or amplify it? How does Seitz incorporate both the aforementioned border-safety qualifications and Catholic morality in his thinking on immigration? Is there a way to acknowledge the supposed need for border security without giving credence to anti-immigrant politics?
3. Seitz argues that “there should be a public and prophetic dimension” to the Church’s witness on immigration. Has your faith community done any meaningful acts of solidarity with migrants? When and how should Church leaders speak out on immigration? Should they endorse—or oppose—specific policies? Can the Church meaningfully speak out for the dignity of migrants without doing so?
4. Seitz explains, “My community also includes the more than fifty thousand persons in my diocese who do not have the benefit of documents. They, too, are just as much a part of my community.” What would it mean for this attitude to extend beyond a church community into secular politics? Is there a way to give documented and undocumented immigrants alike meaningful political power in their local communities?
5. Seitz expresses hesitancy about the sanctuary church movement: “I’m not commending sanctuary as a strategy to respond to mass deportations,” he writes. “The legal complexities are nuanced, and there is no way our institutions could offer long-term respite to 13 million persons.” Do you agree? Does the conversation about sanctuary churches get in the way of less publicized but more effective vehicles for protecting immigrants? If so, what are those vehicles?
6. How does the Trump administration’s repressive immigration agenda impact your local community? If you are not part of an immigrant community, how much do you know about immigrant communities near you? What tangible steps might you take to stand up for them—and who would you need to talk to in order to find out their most pressing needs?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Dominic Preziosi and Kenneth L. Woodward with Bishop Mark J. Seitz, “‘We Need to Talk About People,’” May 15, 2025:

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/bishop-seitz-mark-deportations-migration-woodward-preziosi>

The Editors, “‘And You Did Not Welcome Me,’” February 25, 2025: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/and-you-did-not-welcome-me>

Massimo Faggioli, Kerry Robinson, and Cardinal Blase Cupich on *The Commonweal Podcast*, “The New ‘Preeminent Urgency,’”

February 18, 2025: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/podcast/new-preeminent-urgency>

Alejandra Oliva, “Visibly Invisible,” March 2025: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/ICE-immigration-trump-chicago-oliva>

John Gehring with Bishop Mark J. Seitz, “‘At the Crossroads of Migration,’” February 2023:

<https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/seitz-el-paso-migration-biden-border>