

## **Mary Ann Glendon on U.S. Immigration Policy Pontifical Academy President Suggests a Principle to Guide Debate**

NEW YORK, MAY 24, 2006 (Zenit.org).- Part of the solution to the United States' immigration problems will require a renewed commitment to solidarity, says Mary Ann Glendon.

Glendon, the president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and a Harvard law professor, writing in the June/July issue of *First Things*, argues that such a commitment to solidarity is necessary to maximize the advantages and minimize the disadvantages of immigration for all involved.

Her comments come amid a national debate, dominated by alarmists on one hand and those who ignore problems associated with liberal immigration policies on the other.

For her part, Glendon observes that the world is experiencing an age of great movement of people. Worldwide, there are some 200 million migrants and refugees.

She states that, despite an ongoing conversation, especially in the United States, about what to do with the great influx of migrants, the debate has been largely silent regarding the relation of this phenomenon to the "demographic winter" occurring in Europe and North America.

Glendon notes that because of social experimentation, as well as what she calls the "culture of self-fulfillment" in these regions, people are having fewer children and the basic social structure of the family is being altered gradually.

### Advantages

The point often overlooked is that societies that accept fewer children will have to accept more immigrants. "The issue is not who will fill the jobs Americans don't want," writes Glendon. "The issue is who will fill the ranks of a labor force that the retiring generation failed to replenish."

Nevertheless, America has distinct advantages in solving its demographic problem that Europe does not share.

The United States has a history of pluralism as well as experience absorbing and assimilating millions of immigrants from all over the world. Furthermore, most of America's immigrants come from largely Christian countries, and thus share a similar cultural heritage with the United States.

However, for any assimilation process to be successful, Americans will have to avoid lumping immigrants into multiculturalist subgroups such as "Latino," insists Glendon.

As well, she continues, Americans will have to address the "rule of law" and economic

problems associated with the prospects of granting citizenship or amnesty to large numbers of immigrants -- problems that are very different from those faced in the great waves of immigration in the early 20th century.

The call to solidarity

Glendon closes by asking all participants in the debate to re-examine the five principles of the joint statement of the American and Mexican bishops entitled, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope."

Those principles are:

- 1) persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland;
- 2) when opportunities are not available at home, persons have the right to migrate to find work;
- (3) sovereign nations have the right to control their borders, but economically prosperous nations have the obligation to accommodate migration flows;
- (4) refugees and asylum seekers should be protected; and
- (5) human dignity and rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.

To these five principles, Glendon advocates a sixth: "the need for a highly diverse, rule-of-law society to be careful about the messages it sends to persons who wish to become part of that society."

Citing Pope John Paul II, Glendon argues that solidarity imposes obligations on the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged. While the advantaged should care for the needs of the disadvantaged, the latter cannot be passive recipients of aid or undermine the social fabric, but must instead contribute all they can to the common good.

While these principles might be somewhat in tension, Glendon argues they are the basis of sound solutions to a heavily charged policy battle.

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