

A blessed Monday to all!

Today we look back to this date, May 19, in 1921.

The Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 was signed into law, establishing annual immigrant nationality quotas for the first time in the United States. The law specifically targeted Asians and newcomers from southern and eastern Europe. The goal was to limit the influx of anyone whose customs, language, and religion were different from those of the descendants of northern European and British immigrants who made up the bulk of American society.

A couple of years later, Rep. Albert Johnson (R-Wash.), chairman of the House Immigration Committee stated: “It has become necessary that the United States cease to function as an asylum” for immigrants. However, exceptions were made for immigrants coming from Germany, Britain and Ireland. It seemed that the U.S. could serve as asylum for select groups of immigrants...just not the others.

104 years later, almost to the day, group of white South African refugees arrived in the U.S. on Monday May 12 under President Trump's executive order mandating they be prioritized for resettlement — even as the broader refugee program remains largely on hold. Once again, providing a possibility of asylum for select immigrants...not for all.

Catholic Charities is founded on Catholic Social Teaching. On February 11, 2025, our late Holy Father, Pope Francis, sent a letter to Bishops in the United States on the nation's new immigration policy. In it, he states:

*“This is not a minor issue: an authentic rule of law is verified precisely in the dignified treatment that all people deserve, especially the poorest and most marginalized. The true common good is promoted when society and government, with creativity and strict respect for the rights of all — as I have affirmed on numerous occasions — welcomes, protects, promotes and integrates the most fragile, unprotected and vulnerable. This does not impede the development of a policy that regulates orderly and legal migration. However, this development cannot come about through the privilege of some and the sacrifice of others. What is built on the basis of force, and not on the truth about the equal dignity of every human being, begins badly and will end badly.”*

Catholic Charities faces a significant amount of criticism and false allegations related to our services and resources reflective of the dignity and needs of immigrants and asylees. Despite this, we continue in our daily functions and services designed to comply with the words of exhortation from Pope Francis --who addresses the faithful in stating:

*“I exhort all the faithful of the Catholic Church, and all men and women of good will, not to give in to narratives that discriminate against and cause unnecessary suffering to our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters. With charity and clarity we are all called to live in solidarity and fraternity, to build bridges that bring us ever closer together, to avoid*

*walls of ignominy and to learn to give our lives as Jesus Christ gave his for the salvation of all."*

A myriad of thanks for all those who work for, volunteer, and support Catholic Charities of Stockton. We continue to do great things due to your sacrifices.

Blessings

Deacon Mike