

A very blessed Memorial Day to all!

On this date, May 26, 1942, the Nazi regime signed an order requiring Jewish people residing in Belgium to wear a yellow Star of David patch for public identification. The Nazis implemented the order in a systematic manner, as a prelude to deporting Jews to ghettos and killing centers in German-occupied Eastern Europe.

Today we also celebrate Memorial Day, a time-honored day of remembrance dedicated to honoring the brave men and women who have sacrificed their lives in military service to the United States. It serves as a poignant reminder of the cost of war and the sacrifices made to protect global freedom for all people. It is a day of particular importance to families of the approximately 70–85 million who lost their lives in the war that cost the most in human casualties, WW II.

The Second World War demonstrated how quickly the Nazis transformed Germany from one of the world's most vibrant democracies-- to a one-party state capable of the most inhumane actions against human beings imaginable, including racial denigration and genocide.

At the same time, here in the U.S., Senator Robert Reynolds proclaimed on the Senate floor in 1941, "I would today build a wall about the United States so high and so secure that not a single alien or foreign refugee from any country upon the face of this earth could possibly scale or ascend it." Senator Reynolds frequently denigrated Mexicans and other "aliens" and worked incessantly to stop them from coming here. He was openly and defiantly anti-Semitic. He claimed to be a patriot but publicly praised foreign tyrants and tried to justify their actions as they waged war on others.

84 years later, the Trump administration announced it would require public registration with the federal government for some undocumented immigrants. Secretary Kristi Noem confirmed the Department of Homeland Security's full enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which created multiple tools to track illegal aliens and compel them to leave the country voluntarily. One tool is a "registration process" along with criminal and civil penalties (including misdemeanor prosecution) for people who do not comply.

Catholic teaching emphasizes that all individuals, regardless of race or ethnicity, possess inherent dignity and are fundamentally equal as children of God. This principle is rooted in Scripture and is a cornerstone of Catholic social teaching. The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, color, social conditions, language, or religion must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design". The forced wearing of "Star of David" patches, involuntary public registries, threats of fines, imprisonment, or

deportation to hostile countries... without any means for release back to their families, are all incompatible with God's design.

At Catholic Charities of Stockton, we do not only apply these principles to those who come to us seeking assistance with their immigration status. People of every race, religion, or social status... people who battle physical, mental, emotional or societal challenges... the elderly and the young... may be in need of healthcare, food or housing security, crisis assistance, disaster relief, in-home care and many other challenges. If we have the resources to help them...we help them.

Blessings to all those who help us to help others! -- Deacon Mike