



IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER

...providing factual information about immigration and immigrants in America

April 2008

Pope Benedict XVI Calls for Compassion For America's Newcomers Rep. Tancredo and Lou Dobbs Issue Responses

"It's not everyday that a backbencher in Congress draws international attention by insulting the spiritual leader of one in four Americans. But Colorado Republican Tom Tancredo, the anti-immigrant obsessive, wasn't about to miss his moment." (The Wall Street Journal, April 22, 2008).

During his first trip to the United States in April 2008, Pope Benedict XVI emphasized the importance of treating immigrants in the U.S. in dignified and humane manner, including calling on U.S. bishops to "continue to welcome the immigrants who join your ranks today, to share their joys and hopes, to support them in their sorrows and trials and to help them flourish in their new home." Without missing a beat, anti-immigrant voices, including CNN anchor Lou Dobbs and U.S. Representative Tom Tancredo (R-Littleton), took the occasion to push their rhetoric to a new level, lambasting the Pope for his comments.

Lou Dobbs [said the Pope](#) "insult[ed] our country" and that he didn't "appreciate the bad manners of a guest telling [him] in this country and [his] fellow citizens what to do." Tancredo went as far as to issue a [press release](#) accusing His Holiness of being insincere. " 'I suspect the Pope's immigration comments may have less to do with spreading the gospel than they do about recruiting new members of the church,' said Tancredo. 'This isn't preaching it is 'faith-based' marketing.'" The Wall Street Journal commented on Dobbs' and Tancredo's reaction in a [recent editorial](#) saying, "You know the restrictionists have gone head-first into the fever swamps when they denounce a Christian religious leader for sounding like a Christian."

See below for more of Pope Benedict XVI's thoughts on immigrants and immigration in the U.S.

Celebration of Vespers and Meeting with the Bishops of the United States of America, National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Wednesday, 16 April 2008

"Brother Bishops, I want to encourage you and your communities to continue to welcome the immigrants who join your ranks today, to share their joys and hopes, to support them in their sorrow and trials, and to help them flourish in their new home. This, indeed, is what your fellow countrymen have done for generations. From the beginning, they have opened their doors to the tired, the poor, the 'huddled masses yearning to breathe free.' These are the people whom America has made her own."

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Interview with His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, during his flight to America, Tuesday, 15 April 2008

The fundamental solution [to the situation of immigrants in the United States] is that there would no longer exist the need to emigrate because there would be in one's own country sufficient work, a sufficient social fabric, such that no one has to emigrate. Therefore we should all work for this objective, for a social development that permits offering citizens work and a future in their land of origin. And also about this point, I would like to speak with the President, because above all the United States should help with the aim that these countries can develop in this way. This is in the interest of everyone, not just of these countries, but of the world, and also of the United States.

Besides this, short-term measures: It is very important to help the families above all. In the light of the conversations that I have had with the bishops, the principal problem is that there be protection for the families, that they not be destroyed. What can be done should be done. In the same way, naturally, all that is possible must be done to work against the instability of the situations and against all the violations, and to help so that they can have a truly dignified life where they find themselves in this moment.

Final Holy See – US Joint Statement, Oval Office, Wednesday, 16 April 2008

“The Holy Father and the President also considered the situation in Latin America with reference, among other matters, to immigrants, and the need for a coordinated policy regarding immigration, especially their humane treatment and the well being of their families.”

Celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI, Yankee Stadium, Sunday, 20 April 2008

“Today we recall the bicentennial of a watershed in the history of the Church in the United States: its first great chapter of growth. In these two hundred years, the face of the Catholic community in your country has changed greatly. We think of the successive waves of immigrants whose traditions have so enriched the Church in America...In our day, too, the Catholic community in this nation has been outstanding in its prophetic witness in the defense of life, in the education of the young, in care for the poor, the sick, and the stranger in your midst.”