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How Dare We Discriminate Against Others?

To paraphrase former President Reagan, “Here we go again...!”

The news reports that some of us are not going to vote for one of our presidential candidates because of skin pigmentation; I have heard others say they are choosing a candidate based solely on gender – either choosing a woman leader or anyone but a woman leader.

A laugh for the day (at a tragedy, actually) came via Associated Press. Federal officials in Texas are going to check for immigration status at inland checkpoints before they let people continue to evacuate should there be another major storm! (Where are our traffic flow experts when we need them?)

Aren't these moves discriminatory – even though all are human persons just like me? Our human dignity comes from our Creator – not from any government, financial institution, ethnic group, cultural club or awarding organization. We disrespect the reality of our God-given human dignity at our own grave peril, it seems to me.

How can discrimination be a guide to good choices? Actually, how dare we discriminate against other human persons based just on skin color, hair texture, facial features, place of birth, or against persons put at disadvantage by unwise, sometimes downright unjust and/or very incomplete laws of our own making – and not considering the ideas and values of others, or the quality of their character? I keep remembering and chuckling at Rev Forbes suspecting that at times God must ask, in divine startle: ‘You all said I said...WHAT...??’ Again, a chuckle at something that often enough is just tragic. But then there is power in laughter.

I hear reports of very oppressive proposals, laws and actions against people here without documentation, where other citizens are being swept up in big raids, families being separated in the process sometimes. How can repression be the best and only answer to a problem that is many-sided? We need laborers, given our aging popula-

tion; our trade policies have hurt jobs in other countries; we don't insist that wealthy people in our trading partner countries loosen access to investment money there so small business jobs can be created and people can stay home and make a decent living.

Won't our repression “simply” drive immigrant workers, their families and some employers into shadows, strengthening an underground economy and society? And then we will agonize over this – because we didn't get to causes of the problem in the first place.

In short, we don't seem to examine and address causes; we far too often repress people at economic and/or legal disadvantage. It has occurred to me that though we can get people to the moon and telescopes to Mars, we don't seem smart enough to deal with our immigration challenge beyond building a fence and getting meaner, putting people in expensive and ineffective detention centers and losing their labor all the while.

Why can't we share more, better? Sharing promises to be Job 1 as we go forward economically and environmentally. Aren't we after all, at root, sisters and brothers?

I recently heard a colleague note how efficient, thorough and caring some staff members were at an institution in another city; they seemed to be from other countries. Isn't it a blessing to have them here? To benefit from their labor and their spirit? To deepen our own appreciation of this place on Earth as we experience the excitement of persons newly arrived among us?

May we step back a bit, listen to our better angels, and certainly live the glorious national values we profess and for which in earlier times we have given many lives. “Here we go again” would then be much better news for everyone!

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