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Pope Francis & Immigration

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

I just wrote, and will keep, the title above, but it is not quite right. The Vatican announced this morning that next week Pope Francis will go to the small island of Lampedusa where immigrants from Africa seek to enter Europe. Recently, a boat carrying many of these desperately poor migrants capsized killing many of the migrants. The Pope clearly sees what many opponents of comprehensive immigration reform do not see: These are people we are talking about. I do not know what the Pope thinks about the bipartisan immigration bill that passed the Senate last week, but it is clear what he thinks about migrants themselves - he loves them, which probably tells you all you need to know about how he would view the immigration bill that is now headed to the House. The solicitude for the poor and the migrant is as surely and obviously a bedrock value for Catholics as is our defense of unborn human life. In both instances, prudential judgment is required to determine how to legislate in these areas, but nobody can invoke prudential judgment as a get-out-of-jail free card to justify opposition to immigration.

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