

For many years there has been a pitched battle going on in the Western World about the proper way to treat refugees and immigrants. The issue perhaps reached a crescendo when President Trump pointed out the dangerous migration of some 1500 asylum seekers travelling gradually north from central America through Mexico in hopes of coming into the US as political refugees. His alarm at these people points out again the need, he said, to 'build a wall' to keep out such riff-raff. Even though the current Republican congress has so far refused to fund this neo-Berlin wall— our president and vice president insist on maintaining their tough talk: "We're going to build a wall."

Granted, the immigration problem IS huge; it has a long and complex history. But the problem is being blamed on the wrong people: the world's legislators and politicians have lacked the wisdom and courage to provide any form of legislation that can provide a fair and lasting ^{the} solution. Do you remember the Braceros who used to come over legally and return with wages? I do. Not perfect, but immeasurably better than things are today. So immigrants suffer, families suffer, our farms and businesses suffer, due to political inaction. But is the current action, the right action?

At roughly the same time I was hearing all this wall-building rhetoric, I was forced to visit a doctor due to an illness. As I sat in the doctors office waiting to be treated, I noticed a friend who is one of the finest physicians in the region: he just happens to be the son of parents who immigrated from Iran; the doctor who treated me was an immigrant from Ukraine; other fine doctors I know in this community have come here from India, Germany, Japan and the list goes on. That's just in our region, naming friends who are doctors, lawyers, investment bankers and wonderful people making America a better place to live. We are a nation of immigrants: at least we used to be!

Maybe we shouldn't wait for the politicians to handle relations ^{international} to ~~those who are from~~ ~~countries~~. Ordinary citizens can do a lot.

For example, in the *NCJ* there was a recent article about a local woman, Marie Escher, who had inherited a lovely painted statue of baby Jesus that, even though it had been in her family a long time, she knew was originally from Guanajuato, Mexico. She decided it was right to repatriate the delicately painted baby Jesus back to his town of origin. It wouldn't be easy. She found out that the Niño Dios sculpture could easily end up being confiscated and on the black market. But she persisted, got some help from congressman Huffman, emeritus professor Diane Johnson and two fine agents from Homeland Security, and ^{again esta} voila (arriba!) baby Jesus is on his way home. Don't you think it is ironic that if baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph, ^{most} who were refugees long ago, were applying for asylum status in the US today, it would likely be denied?

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment