

Treating all with respect and dignity is foundational principle of civilized society

There has been much (justifiable) outrage over the President's recent disparaging and insensitive remarks about some immigrants to the United States as well as his administration's purgative immigration policies threatening the safety and unity of many immigrants and their families. What must not be lost in these statements and policy decisions is the underlying lack of acknowledgement of the dignity that is inherent in every human person. Sadly, this same seeming lack of regard for the dignity of every human life coming out of Washington has become all too prevalent elsewhere in our society.

The treatment of all persons with respect and dignity is the foundational principle of a civilized society. It is fundamental to who we are as a human family and is at the heart of the moral code that we live by as people imbued with the goodness of God, the Creator. Without that mutual respect, we begin to see those among us who are different, especially those living on the margins of society, as unworthy of respect, as "lesser" humans. This tragically flawed view of humanity rears its ugly head not only in discussions about immigration, but also the ongoing quest for racial equality. Coupled with the hopelessness and helplessness that are the byproduct of such societal judgments, too many citizens turn to lives defined by acts of despair and desperation.

Each of us has been given the gift of life, the most precious gift any of us could ever receive. And with that gift comes the capacity to love another, to contribute something of ourselves to the common good. When we begin to see and treat human life as disposable or we lose sight of that dignity possessed by all of God's children, whether they are immigrants, the unborn, the elderly, the homeless, the addicted, or minorities, then we've lost our way as a human family and as a nation.