

# March Newsletter

Friends,

Well, Valentine's Day has passed. I finished shoveling snow on this Saturday morning, and it is still winter in the Heartland (despite Woodstock Willie predicting an early spring unlike that groundhog from Pa.), and Lent has yet to arrive as I write.

Patrick McMahon from our Scranton group recommended the first article in our *IBC Topics* the title of which starts with "Dear Catholic Boomers."

I chose the second article—"Habits of Judgment: Emotions, Ethics, and Social Critique on the Border" by Michael Petro, S.J.—because it is a very good theological reflection piece and because of the experience of the Ignatian Wisdom Fellows several days after the border was closed by a presidential executive order. Our group returned from a weeklong experience at the beautiful Redemptorist Retreat Center in Tucson and at the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Mexico, a mission of the Jesuit Province West and several religious groups. During our second day at the Kino Border Initiative, which, incidentally, is the first building one encounters after going through border security, we had the privilege of listening to a Venezuelan family—parents and four, 10, and 17-year-old girls—tell of their journey on foot to Mexico through the jungles of Central America, only to arrive, after a four-month wait in Mexico City, for a court hearing in Nogales, Arizona. On January 21, they arrived at the border for their hearing and were told that the border had been closed on January 20 by executive order. They were turned away even though international law allows asylum seekers the right to a hearing.

The family told their story through tears; they were escaping poverty in Venezuela to follow a dream of a better future for their children in the United States. When the father spoke about men in hoods in the jungle separating him from his wife and girls, he broke down in tears, and there was not a dry eye in the room. The father had developed a small business carting fish, vegetables, and fruit to markets. He owned a pickup truck and a home which he sold to come to America. I loved his entrepreneurial spirit, his love of family, and his drive to follow a dream for his children.



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So, to form wisdom leaders in the Ignatian tradition, it is important for lay people to be able to tell the story and to give witness, and the article by Michael Petro eloquently captures the same experience and then offers a rich theological reflection. This is my way of inviting you to read a longer second *Topics* article this month.

My book recommendation for this month follows from the migration and refugee themes in scripture and the *IBC Topics* articles. The book is *Voices of the Border: Testimonios of Migration, Deportation, and Asylum*, edited by Tobin Hansen and Sister Maria Engracia Robles Robles, ME, with a forward by Sean Carroll, S.J. It is a powerful read and a counter story to the demonization of the migrant and asylum seeker. You also might want to visit the Kino Border Initiative website [kinoborderinitiative.org](http://kinoborderinitiative.org).

Stay warm and well. Get ready for Lent. And catchers and pitchers reported for training this week—a sign of hope for spring!

Pax,

John Fontana

PS: Baseball season opens on March 18 and 19 when the Cubs play the Dodgers in Tokyo. To get you in the mood, [HERE](#) is a look back at one of the many colorful personalities in our national game, courtesy of RENEW International managing editor Charles Paolino.



## MISSION

The Mission of the Ignatian Business Chapters is to establish and lead a national and international network of business executives to explore their respective religious traditions in order to help the individual executives

- integrate faith, family, and professional life,
- develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values, and
- exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large.

The chapters, grounded in the Roman Catholic tradition, welcome believers who are open to and respectful of one another's religious traditions. They are committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one's religious heritage.

## SCRIPTURE READING:

### Matthew 2:13-23

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

"A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

## ARTICLES

**"Dear Catholic Boomers: Don't get too comfortable during Trump's next four years,"**  
by Valerie Schultz. *America Magazine: The Jesuit Review*, February 2025.

**"Habits of Judgment: Emotions, Ethics, and Social Critique on the Border,"**  
Michael Petro, SJ.

## Video:

View a short video [HERE](#) that acts as a companion to the America Magazine article.





## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**Be attentive:** These two articles from our prophetic tradition invite us to see the consequences of our political systems and they invite us to contemplation. What feelings/emotions were provoked?

**Be intelligent:** What are you or we invited to think about, particularly in the Ignatian tradition?

**Be reasonable:** Is there a call to action, a call of the mind and the heart? How will this affect your work and family and community? Will you be called to share the stories or to witness?

**Be responsible:** What were key insights that surfaced in today's discussion? Any food for further contemplation? Any action steps? What are the implications for you at work, in your community, and at home? Leverage the conversation for good!



## CLOSING PRAYER

### Personal Prayer of Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes;  
to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times;  
to relish the things that are yours, and to communicate them to others.  
Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen!

*The scripture passage is taken from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Catholic Edition, copyright © 1989, 1993 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

