

Sister Eileen McKenzie: Group's work highlights dignity, rights of immigrants

I am concerned about anti-immigrant rhetoric ("Trump's immigration rhetoric resonates with some Democrats," April 1). It's worrisome how false accusations can gain traction. No one person, group or nationality "poisons the blood" of any country or state.

Our immigration system is in need of serious reform and the reasons people migrate need to be taken into account. Sixteen percent of our national population are immigrants, and more people are seeking protection from violence through asylum, according to the Immigration Research Initiative.

I work with families at the Arizona border who are simply looking for a safe place to live, build a home and raise their children; something that many of us born in the U.S. might take for granted.

I understand the concern that immigration can strain already underserved communities. However, we need to recognize that newly arriving immigrants grow the economy and pay taxes. For each 1,000 workers, it is predicted that initial tax revenues increase by \$2.5 million, according to the Initiative. A recent study from the U.S. office of Health and Human Services found that over the last 15 years, refugees have contributed \$123.8 billion more than what they cost the government.

I feel hopeful when I learn of the work of the Coulee Region Immigration Task Force, which highlights the dignity, potential and rights of people who migrate into the area. Their efforts show that La Crosse residents want to build space to welcome others. Let's continue to follow their lead.

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