

[Opinion](#)  
[Guest Voices](#)



Migrants are escorted Jan. 27, 2025, across the Hidalgo International Bridge in McAllen, Texas, at the U.S.-Mexico border as they are deported under Title 8, a law that allows for immediate deportation after individuals cross into the U.S. without authorization. (OSV News/Reuters/Daniel Becerril)



by Phyllis Zagano

[View Author Profile](#)

Follow on Twitter at [@phylliszagano](#)

## [Join the Conversation](#)

February 26, 2025

[Share on Bluesky](#)[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)

President Donald Trump, who spent two college years at a Jesuit school, seems to have an affinity for [hiring Catholics](#).

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. are cradle Catholics, as is Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy. Education Secretary Linda McMahon is a convert, as is Vice President JD Vance.

The notable exception is Elon Musk, baptized in the Anglican Church of South Africa. He runs a White House program called "DOGE." If the president has been to Venice to see the Doge's Palace, he may know that the Doge was elected by Venetian oligarchs, who retained the true power of the state. Think about it.

The news is filled with stomach-turning reports about actions by Trump and his minions. While he hires Catholics, there is nothing remotely related to Catholic social teaching in what he is doing.

No one objects to arresting, even deporting, criminals. Rounding up people like cattle and flying them who-knows-where is unworthy of this or any administration. Many of the nearly 12 million immigrants now in the United States have come to find a better, safer life. They have escaped war and other violence. Too many are fleeing poverty, which the U.S. does not consider a justification for asylum. However, being undocumented does not justify inhumane treatment.

No matter how or why they got here, they are human beings. And Trump and his Catholic team say they want to protect life.

Never mind that Trump encourages [in vitro fertilization](#), Vance speaks [nonsense theology](#) or Musk supports racial purity. Combined, the world hears them as xenophobes. They hate people from other countries, especially if they are brown or Black, and they want U.S. citizens to have more children. The right kind of U.S. citizens, to be sure.

Advertisement

Trump's war against "DEI" — diversity, equity and inclusion — wherever federal dollars touch a program, has it upside down and backward. "DEI" means including and accommodating the most qualified individuals, not discrediting their achievements or credentials because of one or another biological fact.

Arguments about transgender issues and homosexuality aside — many people do not want federal funding to support these specific initiatives — DEI officials concern themselves with such things as wheelchair ramps and changing tables in public restrooms, as well as Braille on elevator buttons and handicapped bus programs. Anyone with a modicum of ethical training would temper the administration's knee-jerk reaction to anything that is not straight, white and Trumpian.

On immigration, Vance mangled Catholic teaching so badly that Pope Francis, [in his letter](#) warning U.S. bishops against getting too cozy with Trump & Co., schooled them and him on what the Gospel teaches about the "other." The pope pointed to the parable of the good Samaritan to explain that Christian theology says you help who you can when you can.

In his defense, Vance suggested people Google [ordo amoris](#) to understand his support of wholesale deportation of immigrants, as if Google were the ultimate explainer of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and the Gospel.

Vance and Trump seem confident in their grasp of Christian ethics, but don't be fooled by all the Catholics in the Cabinet or the Latin coming from the Oval Office. Trump's policies now destroying people's livelihoods and lives cannot be supported by anyone, Catholic or not.

As for Trump's years at Jesuit Fordham University, no one knows what ethics courses he took, if any. At a pre-Christmas alumni luncheon, Fordham's president said her office once received a call demanding Trump's transcript be kept secret.

There may be a reason for that.

This story appears in the **Trump's Second Term** feature series. [View the full series.](#)