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Pastor's Column

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Through What Lens Do We Look at the World?

Recently I posted on Facebook the statement by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) regarding the agreement between the United States and its P5+1 partners with Iran (<http://tinyurl.com/ovac7b2>, which is a shortcut to <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/global-issues/middle-east/iran/cantu-welcomes-iran-nuclear-agreement-2015-07-14.cfm>).

The immediate responses I received were very interesting. One response, "I hope the Republicans take notice of the statement..."

Another response was, "The statement is so naïve. Iran is dangerous, but Democrats are so naïve and trusting. They are too trusting. You need to be firm and let the world know who is in charge..."

And there were other comments as well, but all seemed to be viewed through a Democrat or Republican lens

This reminded me of a quote from Bishop Oscar Cantú, the Bishop of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and the Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB): *"Catholics in the United States seem to judge bishops and priests through a political lens rather than judging and measuring their politics through the eyes of faith."*

I believe that Catholics in the United States not only judge bishops and priests in that fashion but also any of the formal statements made by the USCCB.

It was fascinating that immediately the statement on the agreement with Iran was perceived and judged through Democrat and Republican eyes.

The statement should be viewed through the eyes of faith, through the eyes of the Catholic Faith. First and foremost we are Catholic Christians; then all the other labels follow.

We need to remember that we are members of the Body of Christ. His Body and the Members of that Body are world-wide, universal, and know no boundaries, no borders, and no national, racial, ethnic, and political identities.

Depending on the lens with which we view the world, we will see things differently, many times, vastly differently!

Do we look at immigration, for example, through a Republican or Democrat lens, or through the lens of faith? The lens will make all the difference. Looking through a political lens, we can see the Undocumented as the enemy, as unwanted, as people who need to take care of themselves, or looking through the lens of faith, we can see them as our Brothers and Sisters in Christ who are in need of help from other Members of the Body of Christ.

Looking through a political lens, we can see Iran as the enemy, yes, a dangerous government that is causing havoc in the world, and thus we should isolate them or destroy them as some people advocate; or, looking through the lens of faith, we can choose to create a possibility with other countries (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and Germany), to engage the Iranian Government in dialogue, in the hopes of creating a more peaceful world. "Blessed are the Peacemakers. They shall be called children of God."

The lens makes all the difference! Through what lens do you view the world?

Fr. Mike