There are historical situations that force a Christian to ask uncomfortable questions. What happens when a community suddenly receives tens of thousands of people from another country? What should a Catholic do when the irregular arrival of foreigners overwhelms the capacity of a city, increases the feeling of insecurity, and profoundly alters everyday life? Is it Christian to ask for border controls? Is it contrary to charity to defend one's own city? Should we open the doors without conditions? Or, on the contrary, can we reject the foreigner?

These questions have acquired extraordinary relevance in light of what has happened in **Ceuta**. During July 30 and 31, 2026, a massive irregular entry from Morocco took place. Reports published in recent days put the figure at around **72,000 arrivals**, although a large proportion of these people subsequently returned to Morocco.

The situation has generated profound social and security concerns. The authorities have had to reinforce police and military presence, while continuing to work to restore normality.

But there is something that a Catholic must avoid from the very beginning: **turning a political, migratory, and security issue into a judgment about the worth of human beings**.

Because here there are two realities that can — and must — be upheld simultaneously:

The immigrant is a human person who deserves respect, assistance, and charity.

And, at the same time:

A political community has the right and duty to protect its borders, its security, its legal order, and the common good.

There is no contradiction between these two statements.

1. First of all: do not lose reason or charity

When a situation generates fear, the first spiritual danger is not always outside us. Sometimes it is within us.

Fear can become hatred. Legitimate concern can become contempt. The desire for security can be transformed into a desire for revenge.

And this is where the Christian must stop.

Christ does not allow us to hate the foreigner.

But neither does He command us to be naïve.

Christian charity is not sentimentalism. Christian virtue does not consist in closing our eyes to reality, to crime, insecurity, disorder, or the suffering of victims.

Precisely because he loves, the Christian wants the good of everyone.

And the good of everyone also includes those who legitimately live in the city.

2. A Catholic must not confuse immigrant with criminal

This point is fundamental.

A person may enter a territory irregularly and yet not be a violent person.

A young man fleeing hunger may have committed an administrative violation without thereby becoming an enemy.

A mother escaping poverty cannot be treated as though she were responsible for every crime committed by others.

The Church rejects discrimination against people because of their origin or background. The Christian's concern should not be **"What people are they?"**, but rather **"What is happening, and what is the just response?"**

This is particularly important when we speak about Ceuta.

We must not turn a migration crisis into a collective accusation against Moroccans, Africans, or Muslims.

But neither should we fall into the opposite extreme: denying that a massive and irregular entry can create real problems concerning security, housing, social assistance, healthcare, public order, or coexistence.

Both simplifications are false.

3. Sacred Scripture does not teach open borders

There is a contemporary tendency to use certain biblical texts as though they automatically resolved every political question.

That is not the case.

The Bible demands hospitality toward the foreigner.

In the Old Testament we repeatedly find concern for the stranger, the widow, and the orphan.

> *"You shall not oppress a stranger: you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex 23:9).*

And Christ Himself identifies with those in need:

> *"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35).*

This is profoundly demanding.

A Catholic cannot look at a hungry foreigner and say: **"I don't care."**

But neither can we interpret these texts as though Sacred Scripture had abolished civil authority, borders, or the legitimate order of society.

The Bible clearly recognizes the existence of political communities, authorities, and concrete responsibilities.

Charity does not eliminate justice.

Mercy does not destroy order.

And hospitality does not mean the disappearance of every rule.

4. The Church recognizes the right of States to regulate immigration

Here we find an especially important teaching in the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**.

The Catechism teaches that civil authorities must protect foreigners and respect their dignity, while also recognizing that, in consideration of the common good, they may establish legal conditions for immigration and duties on the part of those who enter the country.

This dismantles two opposite errors.

The first:

“Since we are Christians, anyone may enter in any manner whatsoever, and the State has no right to prevent it.”

That is not Catholic doctrine.

But neither is:

“Since they entered illegally, we may despise them, mistreat them, or deny them all assistance.”

That is not Catholic either.

The Church puts things in their proper place:

human dignity + justice + legitimate authority + the common good + charity.

That balance is much more difficult than any political slogan.

And precisely for that reason, it is profoundly Catholic.

5. Does a nation have the right to defend itself?

Yes.

And not only does it have the right: in certain circumstances, those responsible for the common good may have the **duty** to protect the population.

The Catechism teaches that the common good grounds the right to individual and collective legitimate defense.

Furthermore, the Catechism explains that legitimate defense can constitute a grave duty for those who have responsibility for the lives of other people. Legitimate authority may repel aggressors who threaten the society entrusted to its responsibility.

This has a very important consequence.

The Christian who asks for:

- secure borders;
- immigration controls;
- identification of those who enter;
- compliance with the law;
- protection of citizens;
- action against criminals;
- return or expulsion in accordance with the law when appropriate;
- protection of minors;
- sufficient resources for police and public services;

is not necessarily acting against the Gospel.

He may be demanding precisely something that forms part of the common good.

6. But a border does not turn the foreigner into an enemy

Here we encounter the second extreme.

A border defines a territory.

It does not determine who possesses human dignity.

The immigrant who is in Ceuta remains a person created in the image and likeness of God.

He has a soul.

He has a history.

He has parents.

Perhaps he has children.

He has fears.

He has needs.

And even if he does not share our faith, he remains a creature of God.

Therefore, the Catholic must resist expressions that dehumanize.

We must not speak about people as though they were a plague, a contamination, or animals.

Indignation at a situation must not become contempt for people.

The Church has specifically warned against forms of racism and rejection of foreigners because of their ethnic or religious origin.

7. And what do we do about insecurity?

Here we must be equally clear.

If crimes are committed, they must be prosecuted.

If assaults occur, they must be investigated.

If abuses take place, they must be punished.

If someone endangers another person, the authorities must intervene.

And the victim does not become less important because the perpetrator is a foreigner.

Christianity does not require a victim to pretend that he or she has not suffered.

Forgiveness does not mean denying the crime.

Loving one’s enemy does not mean preventing the police from acting.

Mercy toward the offender cannot become cruelty toward the victim.

Christian justice precisely demands that each person answer for his or her actions.

Therefore, we must avoid two equally dangerous statements:

“All immigrants are criminals.”

False.

And:

“We cannot talk about crime because doing so would be xenophobic.”

Also false.

The Christian must speak the truth without hatred.

8. The true enemy is neither a race nor a religion

This issue is even more important from a Catholic perspective.

The Christian knows that the true spiritual battle is not against an ethnic group.

Saint Paul expresses it magnificently:

> *“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the Principalities, against the Powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness” (Eph 6:12).*

Therefore, a traditional Catholic should not turn a migration crisis into a racial or religious war.

He can criticize a migration policy.

He can denounce an uncontrolled border.

He can demand security.

He can defend his city’s cultural identity.

He can ask that the law be respected.

He can even regard certain integration policies as profoundly misguided.

But he does not need to hate the foreigner.

Because hatred is a spiritual defeat.

9. Ceuta also raises a question of political responsibility

A massive arrival cannot be managed solely through the spontaneous solidarity of citizens.

Private charity cannot replace the State.

A family can welcome one person.

A parish can provide food.

Caritas can help.

A priest can offer consolation.

But none of these institutions can indefinitely replace the responsibilities of public authorities.

The Catechism reminds us that political authority is ordered toward the common good and that laws and institutions must protect it.

Therefore, a Catholic can and should demand political accountability.

Ask:

Who controls the border?

Who identifies the people entering?

How are minors protected?

How is security guaranteed?

How is it determined who may legally remain?

How are criminal networks that exploit migrants prevented?

How are local residents protected?

How are those who genuinely need protection helped?

These are not anti-Christian questions.

They are questions of justice.

10. The Church cannot choose between security and charity

We need to overcome a false dichotomy.

We do not have to choose between:

“security”

and

“charity.”

A Catholic must demand both.

A city that is safe for its inhabitants.

And a city where the vulnerable foreigner is not abandoned.

A State that controls its borders.

And a society that does not abandon someone who arrives fleeing hunger.

A police force that enforces the law.

And citizens who do not insult or attack foreigners.

A firm migration policy.

And humanitarian procedures for those who genuinely need protection.

True Catholic social teaching is uncomfortable precisely because it does not fit perfectly into

political labels.

11. What, then, should a Catholic in Ceuta do?

First: **pray**.

Not as an escape from reality, but as the first act of clarity.

Pray for the people of Ceuta.

Pray for those who have arrived.

Pray for police officers and military personnel.

Pray for minors.

Pray for victims.

Pray for government leaders.

Pray even for those who have committed crimes.

Because praying for them does not mean justifying their actions.

It means remembering that they too need conversion.

Second: **do not spread rumors**.

In situations of tension, videos, messages, and accusations circulate rapidly.

The Christian must be especially careful.

Not everything that appears on social media is true.

A lie shared thousands of times remains a lie.

Third: **help those who genuinely need help**.

If you encounter someone who is hungry, sick, or abandoned, you can help.

But helping does not mean assuming responsibilities that belong to the authorities.

Fourth: **defend the truth without hatred**.

A Catholic can say:

> *“I want a secure border.”*

Without saying:

> *“I hate foreigners.”*

He can affirm:

> *“I want the law to be obeyed.”*

Without saying:

> *“They are all criminals.”*

He can say:

> *“I want our city to be protected.”*

Without denying:

> *“Let the dignity of those who arrive also be respected.”*

12. And there is an even deeper question: why do they come?

Here Christianity forces us to look further.

When we see a young African man crossing a border, perhaps we are seeing only the final chapter of a much longer story.

Perhaps behind him there is hunger.

Poverty.

Broken families.

Lack of opportunities.

Corruption.

Wars.

Persecution.

Human trafficking.

Criminal networks.

Propaganda on social media.

And also unrealistic expectations about Europe.

The Christian solution cannot be limited to managing the problem at the border.

We must also ask ourselves:

How can we ensure that no one has to risk his life in search of a dignified life?

That requires international cooperation, economic development, the fight against criminal networks, political stability, and orderly legal channels.

But it also requires something that the West often forgets:

evangelization.

Because a society can offer prosperity and still leave man empty.

13. Let us not forget that the Christian also has a homeland

Catholic universality does not mean that homelands do not matter.

The Church is universal.

But precisely for that reason, she can legitimately love concrete realities.

The family.

The city.

The nation.

The culture.

The language.

The religious heritage.

The history received from our ancestors.

A Catholic can deeply love Spain and, at the same time, love the foreigner.

There is no contradiction.

Universal charity often begins with the concrete responsibilities that God has placed before us.

14. Defending our identity does not mean hating the other

This is perhaps one of the most delicate questions.

If a society completely loses awareness of who it is, it will have great difficulty integrating others.

Europe has a Christian history.

Spain has a history profoundly shaped by Christianity.

Ceuta forms part of that history.

The churches, crosses, feasts, processions, images of the Virgin and the saints, Christian customs, and the Western conception of human dignity did not appear spontaneously.

They are part of a civilization.

A Catholic can want to preserve them.

And he should do so without despising the foreigner.

But neither does he have to be ashamed of his own identity in order to prove that he is charitable.

True hospitality does not require the host to disappear.

15. The Christian response: firmness without hatred, charity without naïveté

We could summarize the entire issue with a formula:

firmness without hatred; charity without naïveté; justice without cruelty; mercy without relativism.

That is extraordinarily difficult.

But that is precisely what it means to be Christian.

If someone needs food, let us give food.

If someone needs medical attention, let us help.

If someone is in danger, let us protect him.

If someone commits a crime, let him answer before justice.

If someone enters illegally, let the authorities apply the relevant legislation while respecting his rights.

If a border is threatened, let the State protect it.

If a public policy is failing, let citizens be able to denounce it.

And in all of this, let us never forget that before us are human beings.

16. The final word belongs neither to fear nor to politics

Perhaps the most important question for a Catholic is not:

“What should I think about immigrants?”

But:

“How does Christ want me to act in this situation?”

And the answer is not simple.

Christ asks us for mercy.

But also truth.

He asks us for love.

But also justice.

He asks us to forgive.

But not to approve evil.

He asks us to welcome the stranger.

But He does not command us to destroy the legitimate order of society.

He asks us to love our enemies.

But He also commands us to protect the weak.

Therefore, in a situation such as that of Ceuta, the Catholic must not allow himself to be swept away either by the propaganda of fear or by the propaganda of naïveté.

He must keep a cool head.

He must inform himself.

He must pray.

He must help.

He must demand accountability.

He must defend the common good.

And he must always remember that no earthly border can erase the fundamental truth of the Gospel:

> ***"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"*** *(Gal 3:26).*

The person arriving from hunger needs mercy.

The person living in Ceuta needs security.

The authority needs prudence.

Society needs justice.

And we all need conversion.

Because the Christian challenge consists precisely in refusing to allow a difficult situation to turn us into what we are fighting against.

We can defend our borders without closing our hearts.

We can demand security without cultivating hatred.

We can love the foreigner without abandoning our neighbors.

And we can defend our homeland while remembering that, above every earthly homeland,

there is a definitive homeland:

the Kingdom of God.

There lies the true measure of the Catholic response.

Neither hatred of the foreigner.

Nor contempt for one’s own land.

Neither naïveté.

Nor cruelty.

But **charity ordered by truth, justice enlightened by faith, and firmness governed by virtue**.