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We need to help less fortunate

To the Editor:

There is a bumper sticker that simply asks the question: "What would Jesus do?"

I like it because it is a gentle reminder to act in a compassionate, fair, respectful and decent way toward all people. Unfortunately, the historic trend is to group people into those who "deserve" our kindness, respect, etc. and those who don't. Almost every new group of immigrants to this country at one time or another has been mistreated and has suffered because of that. Typically, the newcomers are accused of all sorts of wrongdoing, not to mention laziness, being dirty, causing trouble and being a burden to the community.

As I've been following the recent debate on illegal immigration, I recognize the familiar pattern and its sad consequences. Here is the latest wave of immigrants to be blamed for all kinds of problems and whose contribution to society is often ignored. Although they work very hard and pay taxes (sales tax at the very least), raise children and create vibrant communities, help our economy in myriad ways and ultimately strengthen us as a nation, they are not infrequently treated as criminals and denied even basic societal benefits.

They may pay into Social Security (many do), yet will never receive a penny of it. Some towns have gone so far as to attempt to ban illegal immigrants altogether by threatening large fines against landlords and just about anyone inclined to help them. I ask: is it right for those of us who, by sheer fortune, are in this country legally to treat others, less fortunate than ourselves in this way?

What would Jesus do?

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