



Statement of Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, on the Administration's Family-Separation Policy

There is nothing remotely Christian, American, or morally defensible about a policy that takes children away from their parents and warehouses them in cages. This is being carried out in our name and the shame is on us all.

I welcome Pope Francis' recent comment, "I am on the side of the bishops' conference," affirming his support of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement calling this practice "contrary to our Catholic values" and "immoral." This policy must be rescinded immediately.

We are told that family separations are required by the law or court decisions. That is not true. The administration could, if it so desired, end these wanton acts of cruelty, today. It could right the wrongs committed by these cruel policies. Every day it doesn't deepens the stain on America's soul and reputation.

We are told this policy is supported by Scripture. That too is false. There is no biblical justification for building internment camps for children torn away from their parents.

Scripture tells us that God requires no one to follow unjust laws. It also admonishes us against bearing false witness. As St. Paul wrote, the fulfilment of God's law is love.

We have heard the wails of toddlers crying "Mama!" and "Papa!"—children too young to understand what it means to be used as bargaining chips in a political game whose stakes are their very lives. Their cries pierce the conscience. They remind us that every one of them, along with their parents, are made in God's image, and therefore have a dignity no amount of demonizing can obscure.

This is the dignity we Catholics defend when we work to protect the unborn. It is the dignity Jesus Christ called us to uphold by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and, yes, welcoming the stranger. It is the dignity that inheres regardless of one's nation of origin. It is not forfeited once one crosses another nation's border, whether to seek refuge from domestic or gang violence or persecution, or to work for a better life for one's family.

Pediatricians and psychologists universally agree that the trauma endured by these children will have lasting effects on their still-forming minds. It is a form of torture and child abuse, a violation of human rights. It is devoid of decency, bereft of common sense.

Every so often, history presents circumstances that test the soul of a nation. We are living in one of those moments. Whatever this nation of immigrants does for the least of these brothers and sisters of ours will define us for decades to come, in the world's eyes, and in God's.