News



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What the Trump administration is doing against undocumented immigrants is cruel, inhumane and criminal. It is a crime against humanity. It is apprehending people in this country that fled poverty and crime in their own countries. This includes women and children. It is breaking up families and separating children from their mothers as they plea for refuge. It is making people feel unsafe to even walk to the store or to pick up their kids at school. It is making youth that are part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program anxious about their future, or any future. All this is wrong, wrong, wrong.

What this administration is doing is a violation of God's law, of God's love for His children. Jesus ministered to all people, and he loved and embraced all. He fed, clothed, and nurtured the sick and the needy. He did not ask for their legal status. There is a higher law. As Catholics we know this and we have to obey it.

We have to live the Gospel message without distinction as to race, class, gender or sexual orientation. We have to live out Matthew 25 to take care for those in need. This is the basis of Catholic education. This is what we learn in Catholic schools. It is the message of liberation. Jesus was a liberationist. He had a preferential option for the poor and oppressed, as we should also. As Catholics we have to live out this liberationist message.

But do we? We cannot all be Mother Teresa. We cannot all be César Chávez. But we can do what we can and we do it because it is the right thing to do. This is not just materially helping the poor but also protesting against injustice. We need to oppose what the Trump administration is doing, not only to the undocumented but to this country. We need to oppose the cutbacks in social programs, education and program that support the environment. We need to stop the furthering of the military-industrial complex. We need to protest the growing economic inequities around us, where the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and more homeless, and the middle class keeps sliding backward. Justice, social justice, is what we need to build our lives around. This is what it means to be Catholic. Without a commitment to social justice we are not Catholics. This is our call.

It should also be the call of our clergy. We cannot have a clergy that only looks inward and does not address the social problems we face. We cannot have a church and a hierarchy that does not speak out against what the Trump administration is doing. We cannot have Sunday Masses where for one hour we pretend that there is no social injustice outside of the church. This is not what the Catholic Church is about or should be about. We need courageous priests who will stand up on Sundays and, like Jesus, denounce social sin: poverty, racism, sexism, economic exploitation, rich countries robbing from poor countries, the plight of the undocumented, and other crimes. We need homilies of liberation, not of accommodation. Some clergy such as the Jesuits do this; they practice out their faith. But we need more clergy, both secular and diocesan, to stand up and speak out. Will this alienate some of their parishioners? Yes. But is it the right thing to do? Yes.

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César Chávez said:

> "In a nutshell, what do we want the church to do? We don't ask for more cathedrals. We don't ask for bigger churches or fine gifts. We ask for its presence with us, beside us, as Christ among us. We ask the church to *sacrifice with the people* for social change, for justice, and for love of brother [and sister]. We don't ask for words. We ask for deeds. We don't ask for paternalism. We ask for servanthood."

This is what we want our church to be. These are challenging and even dire times and we need the Catholic Church to stand up and be Catholic. To be with the people in the struggle for liberation and social justice. It cannot do otherwise.