



ST. JOSEPH PARISH
THE JESUIT PARISH IN SEATTLE

A Statement by St. Joseph Parish, on the Policy of Separating Families at the Border

“Forcibly separating children from their mothers and fathers is ineffective to the goals of deterrence and safety and contrary to our Catholic values. Family unity is a cornerstone of our American immigration system and a foundational element of Catholic teaching.” -M. Rev. Joe S. Vásquez, Bishop of Austin and Chair of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration

In communion with Pope Francis, the U.S. Bishops, our sisters and brothers of other religious traditions, and all women and men of good will, the community of St. Joseph Parish, Seattle, denounces and rejects the immigration policy of the United States government, which separates children from their parents when families cross the border of the United States. This enforcement policy—chosen, as has been admitted by President Trump and others, in order to intimidate and dissuade possible immigrants and refugees from seeking asylum with their children—is contrary to the Judeo-Christian moral tradition, to Catholic social teaching, and to the most fundamental principles of decency and humanity. It is a policy that causes irreparable harm to the children involved, the most fragile and innocent members of society, and that fractures the underlying structure of civil society, whose laws can only be valid when they serve the common good.

While there are other issues in the immigration policies of the current Administration to which we may also object, this policy of removing children from their parents, and often warehousing them in vast complexes and, as is proposed, tent cities, is so uniquely heinous, so clearly a sin against the common good, that we are compelled to demand immediate action. While issues of a just immigration policy may be open to debate, the inherent immorality of this policy—and the need to rescind it immediately— makes this matter one of great urgency, and compels us to speak out as members of a faith community, and as Americans dedicated to the highest principles of this nation. To injure innocent families as a means of intimidation is not policy but terrorism; to use the suffering of children to enhance the strategic advantage of a legislative agenda is not political negotiation but hostage taking, something unworthy of a great nation and destructive of our fundamental moral identity. In this moment, when the consistent ethic of life is threatened, we refuse to be silent; we stand with our immigrant sisters and brothers, with all people of hope and mercy, and we say: *Stop!*

The undersigned members and friends of St. Joseph Parish, call on all political leaders, of every party, to immediately suspend this policy. We call on our sisters and brothers in law enforcement to refuse to carry out these separations. And we call on all our fellow citizens to speak out and to act wherever possible: to contact your legislators, to ignite your community with peaceful protest, and to undo the injustice being carried on in our name.