

A Statement from the Archdiocese of Milwaukee on the Attorney General Jeff Session's Defense of the Current Immigration Policy

“An Unjust Law is not a Law at All”

On Thursday, June 14, 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions defended the current immigration policy of separating children from their undocumented parents; Attorney Sessions explained that having kids does not give migrants immunity from prosecution — and found justification for his policies in the Bible. Some days before, the Attorney General had announced a change in the immigration policy: victims of domestic abuse and gang violence will not qualify for asylum under federal law.

In his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote: “One may well ask: 'How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?' The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that 'an unjust law is no law at all.'”

What makes a law to be just is the presence of God's truth; and a law that advocates for the inhumane separation of children from their parents lacks precisely of any truth. As Bishop Joe Vasquez eloquently put it, “separating babies from their mothers is not the answer and is immoral.”

The decision to ignore the need to protect victims of domestic abuse and violence is likewise immoral. In his statement, the President of the USCCB, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo explains that denying such protection “negates decades of precedents that have provided protection to women fleeing domestic violence. Unless overturned, the decision will erode the capacity of asylum to save lives, particularly in cases that involve asylum seekers who are persecuted by private actors. We urge courts and policy makers to respect and enhance, not erode, the potential of our asylum system to preserve and protect the right to life.”

Both Congress and the Trump Administration have the moral responsibility of correcting the immorality of such a law, which by no means can be justified by using the Bible. Our broken immigration law should recover the human person and the common good as a center.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is in full solidarity with all those affected by these immoral policies, and prays and hope that true dialogue brings clarity and a just immigration law that reflect our Gospel values.

VERY REVEREND JAVIER I. BUSTOS, S.T.D.

Vicar General

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