

Keeping Families Together Rally

Saturday, June 30, 2018

On behalf of the Interfaith Council, the various religious traditions we represent, and our secular brothers and sisters of basic decency and goodness, we abhor the actions of this administration to separate immigrant children from their parents, as well as the lack of a coordinated plan for the speedy and thorough reunion of those separated. These actions by our government are morally repugnant.

From the religious perspective, these actions are repugnant because our traditions believe in the sacrality of each person. Every person bears the presence of the divine or the Buddha nature or the Ground of Being within. All life, therefore, is precious, particularly life that is innocent and vulnerable. Furthermore, our sacred texts exhort us to recognize the “other,” particularly those on the margins of society, those weak and defenseless. Indeed, we are told that when we act toward human beings in these situations, we are engaging the holy. How we treat those compromised is how we treat God.

Finally, compassion and basic decency must be a part of our posture, for we recognize that none of us chose where we were born, and while we may work to achieve a life, we are acutely aware of the myriad opportunities we have based on nothing more than winning the lottery of birth. All these factors push us to act in ways that support those in need.

Beyond these fundamentals, however, faith or religious belief need not be divorced from reason and rationality. Indeed, one can argue that faith without reason is simply superstition. The life of the mind and the life of the spirit are not divorced. They inform each other.

Thus, not only are the government’s actions on the border immoral, they are foolish. It is foolish to separate children from parents. Insane is more appropriate. The trauma that children experience can lead to even more problems in terms of

physical, mental, and emotional issues that compromise life. We do not protect our country by such actions, we harm the innocent, and create a future where we will be paying for the problems that were created by such a policy.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are foolish. It is foolish to spread the lie that immigrants are overrunning our borders and immigration is bad for our country. Indeed, immigration is the lifeblood of our society and our communities. All communities who welcome and integrate immigrants are stronger educationally, economically, and socially.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are foolish. It is foolish to squander our moral standing in the world by the debased treatment of innocent children and individuals seeking asylum from abuse and violence. When we lose the power of moral suasion, we also move more rapidly down the road where all of the answers to our problems become more and more easily solved by force and violence. This further alienates allies and enemies alike, burdening future generations with the cost of such force and violence, and destroying the lives of our innocent young people who serve to protect.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are foolish. It is foolish to seek to solve an issue based on fear and isolationism. The rejection of trade deals and the isolating of our country, while it may feel good to some or allow for the illusion that we might return to some golden day of prosperity, is worse than blind faith. Engagement is the activity that we must be about as individuals and as a country. We reap dividends when we invest in this way. Furthermore, economies in developing countries that thrive create fewer individuals needing to cross a border to survive. They--like us--are most happy in the home that allows them a modicum of opportunity and livelihood.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are foolish. It is foolish to act out of fear, and allow that fear to poison our lives and the lives of others. Faith is not fantasy. Faith is the very trust, hope, and belief that allows us to

engage more fully in the world, because we have the strength and courage--borne out of faith--to meet the various issues that face us in life clearly, confidently, and utilizing our full cognition. At this dire moment, faith can also buoy us to not despair but to act. And act we must. Act to change the stain on our society made by the heinous acts of this administration. Act, as we should, with compassion, love, and justice for those in need, our brothers and sisters.