

For many, the practice of religion involves an aspect of life that moves us beyond the rational. Faith is the term that people bandy about to capture this sense of that which lies beyond reason, rationality, and the senses. One cannot *prove* the existence of God. Indeed, trust in God is the proverbial *leap of faith*.

However, faith does not necessarily mean that we cease to utilize our mental faculties or that we traffic in illogic, irrationality, and wishful thinking. Faith, as it has been understood throughout the centuries, is not that which takes away from all of our problems. An elixir for all that ails you. Rather, 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.

Thus, the events of the recent weeks regarding the separation of families--particularly the egregious act of taking infants and toddlers away from their parents--at our country's borders has been deeply disturbing on so many levels. While the pertinent arguments from a religious perspective--and our Christian tradition--certainly apply, there also seems to be so much about these actions that is not only immoral but unwise. (It should come as no surprise that one of the ancient understandings of *sin* was *stupidity*.) Certainly, because we are made in the image of God, each of us--every individual--is sacred. Thus our actions toward the most vulnerable among us--children--must embody a sense of care that we would reserve for the divine. Indeed, because we are baptized into the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the world is a new creation, and we have a new commandment of love that shapes not just our actions within our community but also our way of seeing and being in the world. This awareness informs how we treat people, even those who enter our borders illegally. We can differ on exactly what policies make the most sense regarding immigration. We cannot differ on how we treat people or allow people to be treated, and arguing that the law requires immoral action is the last resort of those who have lost their soul.

To recognize this, we also discern that the life of faith is not lived privately, but the life of faith has implications for our actions in the world. Thus, the relationship of faith to reason in this regard seems most telling and important. While it is sufficient to offer the fundamental argument of the sanctity of life when confronted by issues like this, we can--and we should--go further. Our minds know better. Indeed, the use of reason--as a gift--is precisely what we should use in all situations.

Thus, not only are the government's actions on the border immoral, they are unwise. It is unwise to separate children from parents. The trauma that children experience can lead to even more problems in terms of physical, mental, and emotional needs. We do not protect our country by

such actions, we harm the innocent, and create a future where we may be harmed, or certainly where we will be paying for the problems that were created by this policy.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are unwise. It is unwise 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 unwise. It is unwise to seek to solve an issue that is rightly vexing with the proverbial sledgehammer when we need the precision of a scalpel. The rejection of trade deals and the isolating of our country, while it may feel good 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. Economies in Central and South America that thrive create fewer individuals needing to cross a border to survive. They--like us--are most happy in the home that allows us a modicum of opportunity and livelihood.

Not only are the actions on the border immoral, they are unwise. It is unwise 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. We know that our place of privilege is a gift. We did not choose to be born where we were born. While we may have worked hard to achieve, there are all sorts of variables that elude our control and have given us a position of advantage. Aware of this, anything but compassion in our dealings in the larger world is shameful. Indeed, faith informs our action, and if we need to boil it down to the simplest form, the question that remains is also the reasonable thing to ask: What would Jesus do?