

The pictures above express radically different experiences of the world by the most innocent and vulnerable among us: children. The picture on the left is a child migrant in custody at the border. The picture on the right is a sweet scene that I captured as two King faculty children chatted away the evening in the peace and quiet of the rectory's backyard. The recent deplorable news about the abuses toward migrant children at detention facilities makes me sick and ashamed of what is happening in the name of our country. These are not the values of our country, nor are they the values of our humanity. We can disagree on what to do with immigration policy. We cannot disagree on care for the innocent children caught up in a world that they have no agency in or protection from. All children deserve the experience of the two faculty children. No one deserves the unnecessary cruelty visited upon the children at the border. As we prepare to celebrate our country's birthday, we need to reflect on what is the true greatness and goodness of this land and work to recapture it. What follows is a letter to the editor I drafted this past week.

This is not who we are. We are better than this. We must be better than this. These sentiments express our belief regarding who we are and what we should do concerning the abominable actions toward children at our borders. The recent reports about the unsanitary and unsafe conditions that children are forced into at detention facilities continue the chaotic and reprehensible actions toward migrant children and their parents.

As people of faith, we believe that all individuals possess inherent dignity and are created in the image of God. Thus, it is an outrage and reprehensible that we treat immigrants worse than we would many animals while living in the most prosperous country in the world. While we may disagree about the solutions to securing our border and developing a more coherent and rational immigration policy, we cannot disagree that these current actions border on the depraved and are a shame on our country and the very decency of our collective humanity. This is not who we are. We are better than this. We must be better than this.

Please involve yourself in this issue of our time. Many of us ask ourselves what we can and should do. Here are some ways to make a difference. <https://tinyurl.com/y39pxber>
Communicate with your elected officials--Board of Representatives, Mayor, State Representatives, Governor, Representative to Congress, Senators, and President--to stop the madness and work together for the most vulnerable at our borders. Educate yourself regarding this issue and engage your wider community. Report and document raids and arrests. You can support several nonprofits that provide free legal representation and other services for immigrants and the families of those detained. In our immediate community, Building One Community and Connecticut Institute for Refugees and Immigrants provide this needed service with skill and compassion.

Finally, let us all remember that we are the beneficiaries of or disadvantaged by the lottery of birth. While we must work to make our way in the world, there are so many things beyond our control. Let us be particularly mindful of this as we consider those seeking safety in this country. Let us not cede to the fear and xenophobia stoked by sectors in our society. Remember: This is not who we are. We are better than this. We must be better than this.

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