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Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley

Border Immigration Statement

BostonCatholic.org

"Immigration policy presents many challenges for any country. Developing sound immigration policy that respects the needs of a nation and those of the international community is a complex and challenging process. It always involves reconciling domestic priorities and global demands, strategy and tactics, objectives and means. At its core, immigration policy is about people, young and old, alone or in families, often fearful and abandoned. Immigration policy is a moral question that cannot be separated from decisions of what is right and wrong, of justice and injustice. It is about respecting and reverencing the dignity of the human person.

In the year 2018, the moral challenge of immigration is mounting for the United States. On too many occasions our government has taken a posture and established policy which is in principle and in practice hostile to children and families who are fleeing violence, gangs, and poverty. The policies have included limiting the number of refugees and immigrants we are willing to welcome in our country, ending Temporary Protective Status for families who are here, and refusing to restore DACA protection for those who have been among us for all or most of their lives. In the face of today's global immigration

crisis these choices fail to communicate a willingness to address the reality of widespread human suffering, and in many cases imminent danger, with compassion and care.

The cumulative effect of these policy decisions has now reached a critical moral juncture: by the order of the U. S. government, individuals with children and families with children who are seeking asylum at the southern border of the United States now have their children separated from their parents. The intent of this policy is clear: to discourage those seeking asylum by severing the most sacred human bond of parent and child. Children are now being used as a deterrent against immigrants who are appealing to us for asylum in order to protect themselves and their families. As disturbing as this fact is, the narrative of this development makes clear the misguided moral logic of the policy.

These individuals and families are fleeing documented violence, chaos and murder in the neighborhoods of Central America. The United States is now openly before the world using children as pawns to enforce a hostile immigration policy. This strategy is morally unacceptable and denies the clear danger weighing upon those seeking our assistance.

As a Catholic bishop, I support political and legal authority. I have always taught respect for the civil law and will continue to do so. But, I cannot be silent when our country's immigration policy destroys families, traumatizes parents, and terrorizes children. The harmful and unjust policy of separating children from their parents must be ended."

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***About the Archdiocese of Boston:** The Diocese of Boston was founded on April 8, 1808 and was elevated to Archdiocese in 1875. Currently serving the needs of 1.8 million Catholics, the Archdiocese of Boston is an ethnically diverse and spiritually enriching faith community consisting of 286 parishes, across 144 communities, educating approximately 36,000 students in its Catholic schools and 156,000 in religious education classes each year, ministering to the needs of 200,000 individuals through its pastoral and social service outreach. Mass is celebrated in nearly twenty different languages each week. For more information, please visit www.BostonCatholic.org.*



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