Gestapo Parallels in U.S. Deportation Policies
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The law from Exodus, “Do not molest or oppress the alien,” was important, especially in their culture, that people be received and so those that were hurt, God wanted to do something about that. Maybe to update that to our time, the United States bishops have said that mass, indiscriminate deportation is a grave evil, which is what the Old Testament was saying.

While I was gone, I visited a number of synagogues in eastern Europe, and I was seeing a lot of them had to do with the Holocaust. And it came to me that the most infamous example of mass deportation was what the Gestapo did. So I did a little light research on the Gestapo. The Gestapo was a secret state police. They were a political police force. Their tactics included intense surveillance, terror, widespread public collaboration and, most importantly, what's called “protective custody” that was meant to make it okay to arrest people without trial or judicial review, sending Jews straight to concentration camps or ghettos. This crackdown crippled the political left and the trade unions. The Stasi was the brutal arm that enforced Nazi's most radical impulses. It's responsible for protecting the regime from supposed racial and political enemies. It used house searches, informants, brutal interrogation methods. It was responsible for the deportation of Jews to ghettos, concentration camps and killing fields. Their police work was to maintain the political status quo. And one of the, I guess, most horrendous things that I found, it's always thatHasidic Jews are very spiritual, and their hair is very important and so they would cut their beards to humiliate them. They used emergency decrees, which we call executive orders, to transform Germany. They freed the Gestapo from any legal or constitutional limitations, so they enforced the laws. It was illegal to criticize the Nazi Party. The Gestapo was a threat to political opponents, religious dissidents, homosexuals and Jews. They could send people directly to concentration camps by bypassing the court system. The Gestapo was not subject to legal or administrative oversight. They had no legal limits. The Nazis considered the Jews a racial threat. Jewish emigration was the best way to solve the issue. We call that self-deportation.

There's a sociologist who said that the development of an internal political police force is a wary sign for mass atrocity, and the head of the Gestapo was a guy named Muller. I find it strange that the architect for our immigration policy is a man named Miller. And Miller, I think, forgot his roots. His great grandfather was Jewish, and he was a desperate refugee from the pogroms in Russia. And in his childhood, Stephen Miller abandoned one of his companions because he said, “you're a Latino.” He was the one who had orchestrated Senator Jeff Sessions’ sabotage of the 2013 bipartisan immigration bill that was moving

along. He was the architect behind that. The architect behind the ban of Muslims from our country, which was overturned. He was behind the idea of separating children from their parents. And most importantly, I guess, he said, “The real world means you use force, power and strength.” So that's what's behind what's going on. And again I reiterate that the United States Bishop Conference has said that indiscriminate mass deportation is a great evil. And so, just like the Gestapo could not hide behind the fact that they were following the laws. We have a situation here that offends the conscience. If mass indiscriminate deportation is a great evil, if you cooperate in that, then you're part of the evil. What does that mean for ICE agents? Most of those that are arrested today are not done by ICE, they're done by local police forces, traffic stops. They can hold you for 24 hours for any reason. They call ICE, ICE comes and takes them away. What about the local police force? Is that what moral theologians would call material cooperation? I think there's a question here.

The good news comes from the gospel to love God and love your neighbor as yourself. And echoing from Exodus, where it says, God says, “If they cry out, I will hear them.” Well, I think migrants don't want to cry out because ICE might hear them, so we have to cry out, and it's important to reiterate that our Archbishop has cried out in a shrill way, by having a lawsuit against the detention center in St. Genevieve. And I think that because of that lawsuit, which, according to the lawyer that I was with yesterday said, it's a no-brainer, we're gonna win. I'm wondering whether that's why in Phelps County they're not taking ICE detainees anymore, that's one less place in the state of Missouri, and so it's that shrill cry that maybe helps God to help our neighbors, may we be a part of that shrill cry.