

A Prophetic Call for Migrant Dignity

Jeremiah today says that the word became like a fire in my heart and I couldn't withhold it. I believe that God wants all human beings honored with dignity through love of neighbor. And so, like Jeremiah, there's a fire in my heart, and I grow weary holding it in. And I'm glad that others think that way. You know, because of my background, this is personal, so many migrants today are dehumanized, vilified, abused, tortured, and some have died. And I'm happy that somebody with the prestige of Charlie Brennan also has a heart that is burning. Charlie did an article in the Business Journal, and the title was, "No Contact Means No Communion for Jail Immigrants." So he did a little article about the detention center in St. Genevieve, Missouri where there's a no contact facility.

He starts out his article by talking about when he was in another state years ago, and he sat down for an interview with a guy named Joe Dougherty. Joe Dougherty was an IRA operative who executed a British soldier and was hiding out in the United States but got caught by the CIA. And so he sat down next to him to interview him, right next to him, a murderer.

And yet, it's no contact for those who commit not a criminal offense, because crossing the border is not a criminal offense, it's a civil offense. And yet, it's no contact. And to the press, the deputy sheriff there in the detention center, said that we allow religious services as much as possible, just no contact. He said what you need is an unopened, individually wrapped communion wafer and then give it to the guards and they'll take it in. The archbishop responded to Charlie, by saying, "That's absolutely unacceptable." But that's the way we're treated.

The end of the article in here he is quoting from a book that was written about POWs during the Second World War and during the Second World War hundreds of POWs were imprisoned out in Chesterfield and you know that sometimes the POWs got to go and eat in people's homes or go to a restaurant. And the Italians got to go to St. Ambrose Church. The Germans got to go to Ascension Church. It's no contact in St. Genevieve. And so what's going on?

During President Trump's first term, I celebrated Mass in detention centers in El Paso. Now I can't. Values have flipped. And one of my former students, who's now an adult, and married a nice young woman, and they just had a child. He has documents. She's

working on her documents. But she decided to self-deport to Mexico and take the child with her, who is a citizen. Because if she gets deported, she can't come back. If she's self-deported, you can come back and finish your papers later on, maybe. We separate families. Where are the pro-life Republicans? Pro-family? Or Colonel McElroy in Washington, D.C. said that ICE is an outlaw organization. Now if ICE is an outlaw organization, then it behooves those who work for ICE to look at their consciences. Because you can't hide behind executive orders or hide behind laws that are unjust. And what ICE is doing, as we saw in Minneapolis especially, is cruel.

Now it's a little bit under the radar. Although, just lately, they approved \$16.7 million for electric gloves to shock immigrants. And electric shock doesn't leave a mark like it does if you get manhandled or beat up. Or in sanctuary cities since police do not report or do not check status of immigrants in sanctuary cities. So what ICE is doing now is they go into the databases of the cities and check traffic violations. If your name ends like a Hispanic name, then they look you up and follow you. Or unaccompanied children, when they come into the United States, they fill out a lot of paperwork. They've got their paperwork. They know where they live. And many of their family members are not documented. It's under the radar, but it's insidious, what we're doing to human beings.

And I'm thankful that somebody like Charlie Brennan with his prestige, from the KMOX, whatever else he did, is speaking out on behalf of human beings, on behalf of the right of religious liberty. So many Hispanics are Catholic and deserve to receive Holy Communion, deserve the sacrament of reconciliation, which they can't receive because everything is taped. Can't have Mass. I think we need to change that.

Paul today says, "Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by a renewal of the mind." What has taken place in this age, the values have changed, and they're not values anymore. And we need not to conform to those, but be transformed by a renewal of the mind, so that as Paul says, we know God's will, and then not only know it, but do it.

So may we, because of our faith in God, because of God's faith in us, his love of us, which is spread love of others, may we be with our sisters and brothers who don't have a voice. The gospel says, "Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me." Let's share the cross with those that are being crucified and all over the world, so many migrants suffer so much.