San Antonio Archbishop calls separation of families immoral, evil and sinful

San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller said the separation of immigrant families at the border "is immoral, is evil, is sinful."

His remarks came at the COPS/Metro Alliance Assembly on June 18, 2018, at Our Lady of the Lake University.

"To use children as pawns to deter people from coming is inhuman and shows the decadence that we are in, in our country," he said.

"I commend the work of COPS/Metro and urge you to recommit yourselves to these endeavors, to reclaim the authentic vision and values of this great country that is in danger of losing its soul today."

Complete transcript:

We live in very challenging times.

Basic institutions of justice are being attacked. Our social fabric is being torn by demagogues, and there is increasing division and polarization.
There is a tendency to view everything through a political, partisan lens.

Chaos is the result.

People are suffering needlessly.

This is a time of crisis.

We have to make a decision. Do we go along, or challenge these trends?

The problems we face in our community and our nation can only be overcome and solved through coming together to collaborate as neighbors, indeed as sisters and brothers, children of the one God.

Diatribes and harmful rhetoric distort the truth, the facts of our situation. This trial demands mutual respect and trust.

This requires all of us to acknowledge the dignity and value of every human life.

A mutual trust means that we have to be firmly committed to seeking and telling the truth.

We need to speak truth to power.

In 1971, the first Catholic World Synod of Bishops met in Rome and declared that social justice is a constitutive element of proclaiming the Gospel.

That means that social justice is central in following Christ Jesus and the values of the Gospel.

Catholic social teaching derives from the Bible.

Those who view everything through a political lens, often tell priests and ministers and rabbis and sisters and Imams to stay out of politics when they enter the pulpit.

For a person of faith, it is impossible to proclaim the word of God without including what the Bible says on virtually every page about social justice.

Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom of God a place of justice and peace mercy and compassion, harmony and unity, love of God and neighbor.

There is a tension in the Bible. Yes, it is. The Kingdom of God is already among us, but not yet fully established.
Whenever we find people working to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick or visit the imprisoned, we encounter the Kingdom of God.

In Matthew, Chapter 25, Jesus tells his disciples that this will be the main criterion of the Last Judgment. Did we do these things, or did we not? Our eternal reward or punishment is at stake.

What could be clearer?

I would like to say that the situations today are escalating. We are seeing less and less respect for the human dignity.

The separation of families is immoral, is evil, is sinful.

To use children as pawns to deter people from coming is inhuman and shows the decadence that we are in, in our country.

And only people like we are, with many more people, will be able to have a voice and to show that the dignity of the human person is the center of our social justice movement.

I commend the work of COPS/Metro and urge you to recommit yourselves to these endeavors, to reclaim the authentic vision and values of this great country that is in danger of losing its soul today.

Working together we can build a better community, a more just society, a place where mothers and fathers can raise their families in security and safety.

We can do this.

We can!

We can do this?

We can! We can! We can! We can! We can! We can! We can!