

Sister Maureen McDonnell, O.P.  
Keep Families Together—National Day of Action  
June 30, 2018

Good afternoon ... I'm a Dominican Sister of Sinsinawa.

For Roman Catholics, two sources guide our consciences, decisions, and actions: **Sacred Scripture and Tradition**. I personally believe that trying to prove or disprove anything using Scripture is a slippery slope. The Atty.General slipped and fell hard on that slope recently as he tried to use St. Paul's statement in Romans 13:1 to support the clear and obvious injustice being done to people seeking safety from life-threatening situations in their own countries.

And who bears heavy responsibility for the terrible situations forcing people out of most Central American countries? The U.S. is reaping the long-lasting results of unjust interventions, both covert and overt, in those countries, continuing **even today**. We did this with impunity and have **never asked forgiveness** nor paid reparation of any kind. We have caused untold harm to countless humans and to the environment and now our government acts as if the people who are fleeing the results of these evil actions are the ones at fault. If we were a nation of integrity, we **could** look at the situation at our borders as an opportunity to begin to repair the wrong we have done.

Many know of the humble and courageous Salvadoran archbishop and martyr, Oscar Romero. He modeled for all how to turn away from evil and stand with his poor and vulnerable people. In fact, he gave his life for them, assassinated as he celebrated Mass. It is well known that two of the three Salvadoran soldiers who did this were trained at the U.S. Army School of the Americas, still operating in Fort Benning, GA. Finally, his solidarity with his people and the ultimate gift of his life, following Jesus Christ, is being recognized as Pope Francis plans to canonize St. Oscar Romero on Oct. 14.

I mentioned Tradition at the beginning of my remarks. An important part of Catholic tradition is its Social Teaching. Of the seven main themes, three speak directly to the matter at hand:

1. The **sacredness of human life and the dignity of each human person**. This is the absolute foundational principle if a society is to have a moral vision.
2. Our choice to **protect and care for the poor and vulnerable**.
3. Our grounded belief that we are **ONE HUMAN FAMILY**, enriched by our differences, not separated by them.

Jesus went **way beyond** urging us to love our neighbors. He insisted on the drastic,

difficult command to love **even our enemies**. There is a global, universal dimension to this kind of solidarity and love. It is strengthened by our deepening work for justice and peace.

That's what we're here for today. In **these** times, we dig even deeper into our roots in Scripture and Tradition to learn how we are to act.

In **THESE TIMES**, there is no room, no time, for timidity or wondering what to do. We know what to do. We need to be part of a revolution of heart, mind, structures, and action. We need to turn things upside down. We need to resist evil. It is said, "Resistance has put the backbone in democracy." I would say resistance has also put the backbone in faith of whatever kind.

This morning as I read the Scripture readings for today's Mass, I discovered that the first reading is from the book of Lamentations, chapter 2. This is what we hear from the Word of God for today:

"Worn out from weeping are my eyes.... As child and infant faint away in the open spaces ... In vain they ask their mothers, 'Where is the grain?' ... And breathe their last in their mothers' arms.... Cry out ... Rise up ... Pour out your heart ... Lift up your hands to (God) for the lives of your little ones."

We know what we have to do. Let us do it.