

Trinity Stands for Justice

January 29, 2017



(Protesters

greeting international travelers at Dulles Airport on January 28 [photo credit here](#))

Concerning the executive order banning immigrants and refugees from certain countries and Muslims, I sent this statement by email to the Trinity community this morning:

Dear students and colleagues,

Like you, I have followed the news during the last week, and especially the last 24 hours with a mixture of astonishment, horror and sheer outrage. Executive orders and policies that discriminate against and cause positive harm to individuals based on their national origin or religion have no place in a country that claims to be the leader of the free world. What the president of the United States is doing is an offense against our moral values, against any reasonable idea of social justice, and lawyers and judges will most likely prove these actions to be illegal and unconstitutional as well. [Pope Francis](#), [the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), numerous individual [bishops](#) and [religious leaders](#) of all faiths have condemned the president's orders that ban and threaten to deport refugees and immigrants from certain

countries. Courageous judges have issued stays and temporary injunctions against the executive order on immigration, but sadly, many people already en route are trapped in a grotesque Kafkaesque nightmare of airport detention, interrogation, deprivation of basic human needs like restrooms and water, and shameful treatment by our own federal agents. Any notion that this executive order will make our nation safer is preposterous; in fact, this action inflames all those already disposed to hatred, and encourages previously neutral citizens of the world to move against the United States.

I join the Pope, Bishops, religious and academic leaders who have condemned the immigration ban and detainment of persons trying to enter this country, the specific ban on Muslims and persons from select countries, and in particular, the bar to Syrian refugees who are people in grave danger and suffering mightily. We cannot possibly say we will protect our own security at the expense of human rights for others. In the end, our own rights and liberties are also in grave danger.

For 120 years, Trinity has proclaimed a mission rooted in the Catholic faith teachings on Gospel social justice. These teachings demand respect for human life and dignity, solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need, responsible participation in civic life, and service to the most vulnerable in our society who are impoverished and oppressed. Social justice demands that we not remain silent in the face of immoral political actions. The Sisters of Notre Dame who founded Trinity and who still impart their moral influence to us would expect no less than our vigorous defense of social justice principles in the current time.

Our care for those who are suffering starts right here. If you or a member of your family or friends is affected right now by the executive order on travel and immigration, please let me know if you or they need help and we will do what we can to get you help.

[As I have stated previously](#), you are welcome at Trinity and we will care for you and protect you whatever your immigration status, whatever your religion or national origin or language or personal situation. If you are undocumented, you are welcome here and we will do everything possible to stand up for our Trinity Dreamers. If you are Muslim, you are welcome here and we will defend your right to express your religion freely and without fear. If you are from one of the targeted countries, you are welcome here and we will do all that we can to ensure your safety. If you have a green card, you are welcome here and we will stand with you in the face of any threats.

We don't know what will happen in the days to come. As a lawyer by training, I have to believe that the great strength of the American legal system is its ability to confront and stop tyranny. Remember that the Supreme Court ultimately shattered segregation and protected civil rights, and the same Supreme Court forced an authoritarian president – Richard Nixon – to turn over the Watergate tapes that led to his resignation. The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld many other human rights. Congress enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Voting Rights Act of 1965, Title VII protecting women's rights, and more. Despite the worrisome political climate and efforts to manipulate the legal system by blocking judicial appointments, in the end the law must prevail.

We are a strong and confident community at Trinity. We have seen difficult times before, and at each challenge we grow stronger and more determined to be a voice for what is right and just. Our most important work is to educate students who can be leaders of principle and moral value in the larger community. We do this always with a prayer for the grace and courage to remain strong.

I welcome your comments in the box below, or send them to me on email president@trinitydc.edu

With thanks for your great commitment to Trinity's mission in social justice,

President Pat McGuire