

U.S. church 'detains' Jesus, Mary and Joseph in protest of child separation policy



Indianapolis, July 5 (RHC)-- A church in the U.S. state of Indiana is protesting the child separation policy of President Donald Trump. Reverend Canon Lee Curtis arranged to place the statues of baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph in a chain-linked enclosed cage on the lawn of the Christ Church Cathedral in Indianapolis.

"The statement with the Holy Family says as much about our policy as any statement would say," the Rev. Curtis, who came up with the idea, told NBC News. "We want an end to family detentions. Families, all families, every family, is holy, and we hope and pray that families who are seeking out a better life for their kids are afforded that opportunity."

The display went up earlier this week and church officials say they don't know how long it will stay up. The dean and rector of Christ Church, the Rev. Stephen Carlsen, said the display is a direct response to Trump's zero-tolerance policy, separating migrant children from their parents.

"I know what the Bible says," Carlsen told the Indy Star newspaper. "We're supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves."

The reverends are not the first religious members to denounce the policy. During nationwide protests last month, the Rev. Ron Verblaauw, pastor of Rutherford Congregational Church in New Jersey, told NBC New York: "Separating children from families is the first sign we are not the land of the free and the home of the brave anymore. We are the scared."

For Rev. Curtis, the president's policy -- which has separated more than 2,000 children from their parents -- is against everything they preach in their parish. "A number of our congregation at the cathedral are first or second-generation immigrants and this situation is not abstract to them and this is not abstract for us," he said. "This is something that we preach and teach about, and we are partnering with other groups in the state in order to see meaningful reform for detention and deportation. We walked and supported people through ICE deportation proceedings before, too."

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