

LIFE, PEACE & JUSTICE MINISTRIES

“Love One Another”

Our Refugee Crisis (part 1 of 2)

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“Jesus is present, as He was at the time of Herod, in each person forced to flee to safety. In their faces we are called to see Christ’s face who pleads with us to help. In the end, we will be the ones to thank Him for being able to love and serve.” - Pope Francis, 2020 World Migrants and Refugee Day

Pope Francis characterized the refugee crisis as the “globalization of indifference.” The numbers seem to bear this out. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that currently there are some 82.4 million forcibly displaced people in the world (the combined populations of California, Texas and Florida). Between seventy-five and eighty percent of this population are women with dependent children. They live desperate lives in more than one hundred countries, primarily in Africa and the Middle East.

Some twenty-two percent of this refugee population resides in camps. The average length of time spent in camps varies depending on the crisis, but in protracted refugee situations, some may spend decades, even a lifetime living in camps. Only the most vulnerable are identified for resettlement to one of thirty-seven nations. Fewer than one percent of the total number of refugees worldwide are resettled each year. In 2021 the United States, the richest and most powerful country in the world, resettled a mere 12,500 refugees.

There are no established refugee camps nor provisions for resettlement for refugees, asylum seekers or displaced persons originating from Central, South America or Mexico. The Venezuelans, Brazilians and Central Americans fleeing violence, imminent danger, poverty and hunger make their way north at great personal risk. At the border, families with children are processed by DHS, placed in removal proceedings, and admitted into the United States temporarily pending a court hearing. They come with nothing but the clothes on their backs, frightened, weary and estranged. Ironically, it is not the journey’s end but the journey’s beginning.

Catholic Charities San Diego operates two transitional shelters for these refugees, one in San Diego and another in Imperial County. It assists with family unification in diverse parts of the country. Over the course of a few days, each family receives a health assessment, clothing, if necessary, and assistance with travel arrangements. Hundreds of men, women and children move through these shelters each week. The shelters provide a steady stream of welcoming the stranger in Jesus name.



Wisdom from Pope Francis

“...We must make every effort to break down the walls that separate us and ...build bridges that foster a culture of encounter.”



[Read now...](#)

EXPLORE



This website invites you to share the journey with migrants and refugees, read their stories, learn common myths and find ways to get involved.

[Explore now...](#)

WATCH



In this June 2020 TED talk, Sr. Norma Pimentel addresses the importance of restoring human dignity at the Southern border.

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Refugee Services at San Diego Catholic Charities wants to help every refugee find a pathway to self-reliance and a sense of belonging”. Learn how you can help.

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