



ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

There is no doubt we live in polarized times. Virtually every topic seems to be fodder for political division. In such times, our Catholic faith can be tested even more intensely than usual, especially when our faith runs up against public policy. Of course, Catholic teaching is not just for the United States in the 21st century; it is universal and enduring. When we strive to live our Catholic faith and pursue the common good, our work can alternatively be praised or attacked ... and sometimes both at the same time.

We experience this dynamic regularly in our advocacy for the unborn and pregnant mothers in need, for example. Now, we are facing vitriolic backlash online and even in some mainstream media for our care for our migrant brothers and sisters who, like everyone else in our communities, are children of God.

Our nation has a broken immigration system. Our nation's migration and border policies fail us. For decades, the U.S. Catholic bishops have urged Congress and administrations of both parties to revamp immigration law and processes in a way that restores order and promotes human dignity. To be clear, this does **not** mean that we condone unlawful immigration or advocate for open borders. However, in the midst of a broken system and broken world, we **do** always advocate for every person's God-given dignity.

As faithful Catholics, we have a responsibility to carefully discern between provocative narratives and the truth of the Church's work with migrants and refugees in need. The objectification of any human being or set of human beings is not in keeping with the commandment to love one another.

Through our parishes, schools, and social services agencies in which migrants find themselves, the Church provides an opportunity for us to leave behind political agendas and offer the goodness of basic human interactions inspired by the faith and charity which come from God. Any of the thousands of volunteers and supporters who help make our humanitarian work possible can attest to the great gift this has provided for their own faith journeys and our communities. Working with migrants and refugees is a wonderful way to put our Catholic faith into action, just as is serving any other person in need.

The types of services for which migrants are eligible varies greatly depending on their immigration status. In providing support for migrants and refugees, it is important to clarify what

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the Church does and does not do, especially through our local charitable agencies, Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio and Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley.

- We provide humanitarian assistance to **anyone** who comes through our doors should we have a service for them. This may involve food assistance, case management and mental health counseling, all supported through private philanthropy.
- We do not aide or assist in any unauthorized entry into the United States.
- We provide legal refugee resettlement. This federal program, which has existed for over 40 years, partners with local agencies to resettle those who have been identified by the United Nations and thoroughly vetted by the U.S. government. “Refugee” is a formal designation given to a minority of U.S. migrants who have demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution for their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. When a refugee is qualified for permanent resettlement, it is established through multiple federal agencies that they cannot return to their country of origin and that they pose no threat to our national security. Our agencies transparently receive federal and local funds to assist in this work.
- We provide case management services to unaccompanied minors to ensure that they are safe and free from exploitation and human trafficking. Those children that receive these services are placed by the federal government in our area, and we have no role in directing them here. Our Catholic Charities is assigned their cases and receives federal funds to assist in this work as well.

If you have a concern about immigration law or practice, please address it with your government representatives. But always remember your deepest calling as Christians: “whatever you did for one of these least brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me” (Matthew 25:40).

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

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P. S. If you would like to learn more about this topic, please consult the following resources:

- Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio’s [“Frequently Asked Questions on Catholic Charities and Migrants”](#)
- Catholic Charities USA’s [“FAQ’s on Our Service to Immigrants”](#)
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ [Justice for Immigrants Campaign](#)