



Office of Communications

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For Immediate Release

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Archdiocese of Dubuque Response to the Unaccompanied Children and Families Border Crisis

Approximately 60,000 unaccompanied children have crossed our Nation's southern border in the past 10 months compared to approximately 25,000 in the previous 12-month reporting period. Much debate is focused on the legal vs. illegal aspect of these crossings, but non-debatable are the humanitarian needs of these vulnerable children and families.

“Catholic social teaching is based on, and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity. Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human dignity comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment.” *Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*.

Charity and Justice Must Guide Our Response

The necessity of a compassionate and charitable response to the needs of the vulnerable is inherent in our beliefs. We must also look at root causes to determine legal and legislative advocacy responses, which are appropriate for justice to exist. Toward that end, the Archdiocese of Dubuque, through its Catholic Charities office, has convened a group of concerned community members and proposes a multi-faceted response plan to include:

- Outreach and financial assistance to unaccompanied children and families who may take refuge in the Archdiocese;
- Financial assistance to those agencies that are providing social services;
- Coordination of immigration legal representation services to ensure due process is followed;
- Facilitate connections to bilingual mental health services;
- Communication of humanitarian and legislative action items.

To support these goals, the 166 archdiocesan parishes will be encouraged to take up a special collection on the weekend of August 23-24, 2014. The funds collected will be distributed to:

- Catholic Charities USA for case management services at the border;
- Catholic Relief Services, who are present and actively addressing root causes of the crisis in many of the countries of origin;
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Dubuque to support response efforts.

The Archdiocese will also provide financial support through allocation of moneys from the archdiocesan disaster relief fund.

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Justice Through Legal Advocacy

The Catholic bishops of the U.S. have long advocated for immigrant rights. We seek comprehensive reform that allows people to earn citizenship in a way that recognizes their inherent dignity. There are many individuals in our country and our communities who are particularly vulnerable, including children, who are suffering from lack of legal protections because of their immigration status.

“There was reason enough in the past to act, but this latest phenomenon has made it all the more imperative. It is reasonable to expect that the federal government would also, now, finally, respond with appropriate immigration reform. Urge your representative to do what is right,” states Archbishop Michael Jackels.

Individual Financial Support

Donations to support these efforts may be made online at www.dbqarch.org/BorderCrisis or by mail to:

Border Crisis Relief Fund
Archdiocese of Dubuque
1229 Mt. Loretta Ave.
Dubuque, IA 52003

The Archdiocese of Dubuque includes 166 parishes in 30 counties in Northeastern Iowa.

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