



**Refugees** are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who meet the United Nations' criteria of having a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Each year the POTUS authorizes the admission of a certain number of refugees into the country. This determination is based on a consultative process between Congress, the President and various federal agencies. In recent years, the US has accepted between 50,000 to 75,000 refugees per year. Before admission to the US, each refugee undergoes an extensive interviewing, screening and security clearance process.

Refugees, having suffered great loss, including loss of their homes, livelihoods, possessions and oftentimes families, need assistance starting over in a new country.

Their initial needs are many: food, clothing, shelter, employment, English language training, and orientation to a new community and culture. In partnership with its affiliates, the US Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services Department resettles approximately 30% of the refugees that arrive in the US each year. The Catholic refugee resettlement network includes over 100 diocesan offices across the country and in Guam and Puerto Rico. Resettling refugees provides an extraordinary opportunity for countless Americans to take an active part in offering a caring and supportive environment for refugees as they begin new lives. Without volunteers and resources from the community and parishes, MRS and its affiliated diocesan resettlement offices would be unable to accomplish the tremendous task of giving refugees new hope and the opportunity to begin again.

**Migrants and travelers** include people like migrant farmworkers, circus and race car workers, seafarers and others whose work and lifestyle necessitate frequent travel. These "people on the move" may be unable to participate actively in a local parish community year round. Yet they and their families have the same needs for religious formation, preparation for and the reception of the sacraments, opportunities to deepen their relationship with Christ and a need to be welcomed by Catholic parishes when they are in local communities.

The Catholic Church's concern for people on the move expresses itself primarily in a ministry of pastoral accompaniment coordinated by the Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church.



**Prayer For Migrants & Refugees**

Lord Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Lord Jesus, help us by your grace,

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

## ISIS and Christian Refugees

*“There are many who say, why don’t the Christians just leave Iraq and be done with it? To this question we would respond, why should we leave our country, what have we done? The Christians of Iraq are the first people of the land. You read about us in the Old Testament of the Bible. Christianity came to Iraq from the very earliest days, through the preaching of St. Thomas and others of the Apostles and Church Elders. While our ancestors experienced all kinds of persecutions, they built a culture that has served humanity for ages. We as Christians do not want or deserve to be forced out of our country any more than you would want to leave or be forced out of yours. But the current persecution that our community is facing is the most brutal in our history. “*

- Sr. Diana Momeka, Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena, in her testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the persecution of religious minorities by ISIS

*ISIS beheaded 21 Coptic Christians. Surely it is time to dust off the war psalms in our breviaries, to pray the prayer to St. Michael, and to make those fervent supplications we usually tuck away to remain inoffensive within this Pluralistic Disneyland we call modernity — “Save me, my God! For you strike the jaws of all my foes; you break the teeth of the wicked.”*

*We need a violent stirring of the spirit, not for the sake of breathing life into some brutish, martial Christianity (which usually amounts to nothing more than a glorified tribalism), but to kindle in our far-removed, ‘observing’ hearts a little catholicity. The lack of creative fury and indignation among observing Christians is neither a sign of meekness, nor humility, nor patience, nor resignation to God’s will. It is a sign that the Church has forgotten she is Catholic, that is, a universal family. Through baptism and communion she effects lasting, sacramental bonds between the murdered Copt and the oblivious suburban pew-warmer, making them brothers in Christ. It is not the reasonable response of a man whose brother is beheaded, to post about it on Facebook and go about his day. The most reasonable response is the cry of the Psalmist: “As the smoke is dispersed, disperse them; as wax is melted by fire, so may the wicked perish before God.” To realize and re-cognize this family of love we call the Church, in whose arms we do not ‘observe,’ but know and feel the death of our brothers and sisters — that’s why we need a furious cry for justice.*

- Marc Barns, **Fury and Catholicity** on patheos.com/blogs/badcatholic, Feb 16 2015

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### **Resources & Information**

- Donate: National Catholic Fund for Migration & Refugee Services - (<http://dft.ba/-mrsfund>)
- Diocesan Resettlement & Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Offices - (<http://dft.ba/-resettlementoffices>)
- USCCB Family Reunification Program - (<http://dft.ba/-usccbfrp>)
- USCCB Migration & Refugee Services - (<http://usccb.org/mrs>)
- USCCB Anti-Trafficking Program - (<http://usccb.org/about/anti-trafficking-program/index.cfm>)
- CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network, INC.) - ([cliniclegal.org](http://cliniclegal.org))
- Catholic Help Network - ([chn.archindy.org/](http://chn.archindy.org/))
- Arch Indy Refugee & Immigrant Services - ([archindy.org/cc/refugee/index.html](http://archindy.org/cc/refugee/index.html))

*The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness. [We are called to work] so that every person’s dignity is respected, the immigrant is welcomed as a brother or sister, and all humanity forms a united family which knows how to appreciate with discernment the different cultures which comprise it.*

- St. John Paul II, **Message for World Migration Day 2000**