

October 18, 2022

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The sudden and unexpected influx of men, women and children seeking asylum to U.S. cities, including Chicago, over recent weeks has presented our community with significant challenges but also significant opportunities to share God's message of compassion and joy. The plight of these asylum seekers, most of whom are fleeing violence, political oppression and crushing poverty in their home countries causes us grave concern, but I am convinced that this is a moment for us to join together in a mission of love and mercy.

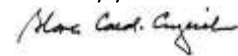
Over 3,000 asylum seekers arrived in our city as of mid-October. Almost all the migrants we have welcomed report that they plan to stay in the Chicago area and will need support to reestablish their lives. Unlike other migrants, most do not have relatives in the States with whom they can live and learn as they build new lives.

The Catholic community has shown an outpouring of compassion as churches, religious congregations, and other ministries have opened their doors, and Catholic Charities has deployed a team to connect people with loved ones and conduct initial needs assessments. Across the Church, many parishes have responded, and more help is needed. We have mobilized to create a coordinated Catholic response to assist asylum seekers so we might maximize the impact of our assistance as we bear witness to our faith. A Working Group has gathered to evaluate opportunities to serve. We are considering several options including transitional shelter, parish sponsorships, and pastoral care for asylum seekers.

In support of these efforts, parishes throughout the Archdiocese will hold a second collection for asylum seekers at all Masses celebrated the weekend of November 5-6. The commitment of faithful Catholics like you will help ensure the success of this mission. Please consider giving to this collection or giving directly to Catholic Charities which will serve as a central gathering point for donations. You can make a donation to this effort by following a link on the Catholic Charities website: www.catholiccharities.net, by emailing donations@catholiccharities.net or by calling (312) 655-7525.

Assisting asylum seekers will require significant time, talent and treasure. Anyone interested in knowing more about participating in this response may contact Tori Bawel at Catholic Charities (WelcomeTheStranger@catholiccharities.net). We will keep you informed and welcome your questions, prayers, and support.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Archbishop of Chicago

Welcome the Stranger Your support honors Jesus' call

Asylum seekers — men, women and children — are arriving in Chicago. Will you welcome the stranger? We are the body of Christ alive in this world. The stranger is hungering and thirsting — Christ is presenting himself to us in their need. We are called to respond with faith and love.

Thousands of people are fleeing violence, political oppression, and overwhelming poverty in Central and South American countries. Since early September, parishes, priests, religious sisters and brothers, church ministries, and Catholic Charities have shown an outpouring of concern for these travelers.

These brothers and sisters in need have revealed to us the fragility, strength, and sacredness of our shared humanity. In turn, they are experiencing the love of Christ through the compassion of volunteers and employees.

Over 3,000 asylum seekers arrived in Chicago by mid-October, and **a coordinated Catholic response is underway** so we can maximize our collective impact. We are providing pastoral care and considering options such as transitional shelter and parish-family sponsorship opportunities.

How You Can Help

Make a financial donation at Mass on November 5th & 6th. A second collection will directly support our collective response. Catholic Charities is serving as the central collection point for donations, which can also be made online at www.catholiccharities.net or by calling (312) 655-7525.

Join response efforts by contacting Tori Bawel at Catholic Charities (WelcomeTheStranger@catholiccharities.net)

Pray for our brother and sister asylum seekers arriving in Chicago. Pray for these mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, that they are welcomed and embraced with Jesus' compassion — and pray that those serving them are sustained by God's grace.

We will keep you informed, and welcome your questions, support, and prayer.