



DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH  
THE BISHOP'S OFFICE



July 13, 2014

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write to you as your bishop to offer guidance in responding to the current crisis involving the flood of unaccompanied children seeking refuge from violence in their own countries in South and Central America. It is important for each of us to remember that this crisis has a humanitarian character instead of the nature of a strictly partisan political issue.

The urgency of the situation requires that we not only respond promptly but prudently---that is, in a measured, stable, collaborative and ordered manner that does not unintentionally or inadvertently do more harm to these already vulnerable minors. As Pope Francis recently stated, “Let us be close to refugees, sharing their fears and their uncertainty about the future and concretely alleviating their suffering.”

Towards that goal, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Worth is committed to working in conjunction with other Catholic Charities offices, other church agencies, and with our federal agencies and local governments in providing a response that directly protects the human dignity of these children while promoting the common good of the United States of America in solidarity with the people of the nations from which these children have fled.

After consultation with Catholic Charities offices throughout the nation, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, governmental and other relief agencies I would offer the following ways in which many of us are able to provide help in an effective manner.

First, we must keep in our private prayers and in our intercessions at Mass these unaccompanied children and their families for they have endured a treacherous journey.

THE CATHOLIC CENTER

800 West Loop 820 South · Fort Worth, Texas 76108-2919 · (817) 560-3300 · Fax (817) 244-8839 · [www.fwdioc.org](http://www.fwdioc.org)  
[officeofthebishop@fwdioc.org](mailto:officeofthebishop@fwdioc.org)

Secondly, I encourage each of us to reach out to our elected officials to remind them that this crisis is of a humanitarian character. Please ask them to direct our nation to work with the leaders of other nations to promote sound and just policies that respond to the violence and injustice that is at the root of this crisis.

Thirdly, one might put together a “Welcome Box” containing one each of the following items: Plastic shoebox-sized container, shampoo, conditioner, body wash/bar soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, brush/comb, pack of hair ties, deodorant and a small toy. Catholic Charities gladly accepts Wal-Mart gift cards of any amount.

Any donated items and gift cards may be deposited on Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m at:

**Creating Hope Donation Center**

249 Thornhill Drive

Fort Worth, Texas, 76115

If you wish to open your home to an international youth in need, consider attending an informational session at Catholic Charities Fort Worth to learn more about the unaccompanied children foster opportunities. Contact Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Worth at 817-705-5562 or go to <http://www.ccdofw.org> for the next informational meeting date.

In cooperation with the vigilant federal guidelines, volunteer opportunities to help the unaccompanied children are limited. Currently, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fort Worth has a large number of volunteers who have undergone training to work with these large numbers. For current information on how to help go to the Catholic Charities of Fort Worth web site.

In closing, we remember that Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, sought refuge in Egypt to escape the threat of violence shortly after Christ’s birth. Let us entrust this humanitarian mission in our prayers to the care of the Holy Family of Nazareth who so deeply knew the pain of being refugees. I remain,

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*+ Michael F. Olson*

+Michael F. Olson, STD

Bishop of Fort Worth