



# DIOCESE OF CAMDEN Life & Justice Ministries

**TO:** Pastoral Leaders

**FROM:** Mike Jordan Laskey  
Director, Life & Justice Ministries

**DATE:** March 2017

**RE:** Refugee Welcome Cards Project

Dear Colleagues:

As you might know, our own Diocese of Camden's Catholic Charities agency welcomes and resettles refugees here in South Jersey who arrive here after fleeing violence and persecution in their homelands. They help these new neighbors find a place to live, access employment and education, learn English, and build community here in our region.

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden's Refugee Resettlement program welcomes about 100 refugees annually, most recently coming here from countries like Cuba, Myanmar, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. Our refugee resettlement program is one very powerful way the diocese answers Jesus' call to "welcome the stranger" in our midst. Currently, we have the only Catholic resettlement program in the whole state.

Through a new project sponsored by Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden and my office, we would like to invite your faith community to take part in expressing messages of hospitality and kindness to the resettled refugees who now call South Jersey home. We'll call it the Refugee Welcome Cards Project. Here's how it will work:

1. Use the resources included in this packet to help educate parishioners about the refugee crisis. These resources include:
  - a. Liturgical aides:
    - i. Bulletin/Pulpit Announcements
    - ii. Sample General Intercessions
    - iii. "Homily Helps" for several Sundays in the season of Easter
  - b. Background information:
    - i. "11 Things You May Not Know About Refugees" from Catholic Relief Services
    - ii. Infographic from Catholic Charities about the refugee resettlement process

- iii. “Welcoming Refugees is the Lord’s work” column from the *Catholic Star Herald*
      - c. Educational/Reflective activities for:
        - i. Reflection Activity for use by parish staffs and/or parish/finance councils
        - ii. Families
        - iii. Elementary-aged faith formation classes
        - iv. Youth Ministry programs
  2. Download the included welcome card template that was sent along with this memo. (It says “Welcome to New Jersey! We are glad you’re here,” at the top.”) Print off copies of the template and distribute however you’d like: As bulletin inserts, at the back of church after Masses, to faith formation families, youth group members, small faith-sharing groups, etc. Spread far and wide.
  3. Encourage members of your parish/school to write/draw messages of hospitality to our newly-arrived neighbors. This can be done at parish/school gatherings or taken home and returned.
  4. Collect and return completed notes:
    - a. Collect completed notes
    - b. Read through them quickly to make sure the messages are appropriate.  
**MESSAGES MUST BE READ AND SCREENED BEFORE BEING SUBMITTED.**
    - c. Make sure the bottom explanatory text has been detached using the printed cut line
    - d. Compile into one package
    - e. Mail to the following address:
- Diocese of Camden  
ATTN: Martha Scutte  
631 Market Street  
Camden, NJ 08102
5. Catholic Charities, Diocese of Camden will distribute packets of the cards to the individuals and families they have resettled here. (This step will help protect the privacy of our refugee brothers and sisters.)
  6. If children or youth would like to create their own cards using construction paper, markers, etc., they should feel free to do so. These custom cards should be included along with any of the completed templates. (See below for suggested activity introduction for faith formation/youth ministry gatherings.)
  7. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact me:

Mike Jordan Laskey: 856.583.2910; [michael.laskey@camdendiocese.org](mailto:michael.laskey@camdendiocese.org)