



## FROM THE DESK OF FR. MIKE

Today I am happy to reiterate what you may already know about Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago as well as invite your prayers and financial support for them on Thanksgiving Day.

In the words of Catholic Charities, their mission is “to fulfill the Church’s role in the mission of charity to anyone in need by providing compassionate, competent, and professional services that strengthen and support individuals, families, and communities based on the value and dignity of human life. Catholic Charities sees the face of God in those in need by providing food, clothing, shelter, and counseling, as we bring hope to the hopeless in the city of Chicago and its suburbs. With 153 programs at 154 locations throughout Cook and Lake Counties, we serve virtually every parish and neighborhood in the Chicago area. Through our broad spectrum of services, we annually assist more than one million persons in Cook and Lake Counties without regard to religious, ethnic, or economic background.”



One aspect of Catholic Charities outreach is their Refugee Resettlement program. For more than 40 years, Catholic Charities has helped refugees from around the world call Chicago home. Each year, we resettle around 200 refugees who have been forced to flee their homelands due to war, terrorism and persecution. Through our comprehensive case management, job development, and K-12 services — and with the invaluable assistance of our volunteers and community partners — we accompany our refugee clients as they transition to their new life in the U.S. and move towards self-sufficiency.

Your contribution to this effort helps refugees build peaceful and successful lives in the U.S. Donations can be shared in the regular offertory at Mass, mailed, or dropped off at the Parish Office.

### Refugee Resettlement Program Fact Sheet

Our program offers assistance in adapting to a new environment for up to two years, providing a variety of services, including:

- Securing housing and providing food, clothing, and household items;
- Applying for public benefits, Social Security cards, and State IDs;
- Scheduling required health screenings and addressing emergency health problems;
- Orienting the clients to public transportation;
- Developing family budgets;
- Enrolling the family in English classes;
- Providing cultural orientation;
- Ensuring children are enrolled in school and helping parents understand the U.S. education system;
- Developing relationships with employers to assist in job placement for refugees

Read about our Refugee Resettlement clients in the Chicago Tribune : [chicagotribune.com/news/ct-refugees-mental-health-met-20170506-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/news/ct-refugees-mental-health-met-20170506-story.html)

Recently, Catholic Charities has welcomed 20 Afghan refugees/families who are striving to make a home here in America. A member of the Board of Advisors shared the following information with me regarding Catholic Charities outreach and ministry to Afghan Refugees:

**Arrivals:** To date, Catholic Charities has been assigned 20 Afghan refugees/families. The pace has accelerated in recent days; we will easily serve at least 50 refugees/families. While some refugees arrive as individuals – men who worked for the U.S. government, and whose families remain in Afghanistan – we are also beginning to welcome entire families, including many children. Key needs are clear: besides housing, clothing, and food, families also need medical care, mental health support, and legal resources.

**Fundraising:** Catholic Charities has been invited by the state’s Access to Justice Fund to apply for grant monies to provide immigration legal assistance and family reunification services.

**Advocacy:** Our team is working closely with other refugee resettlement agencies. Last month we joined a meeting with Sen. Duckworth at Heartland Alliance to shed light on the experiences of arriving refugees and on our work to deliver care and coordinate efforts. Read WGN’s coverage of the meeting:

[wgntv.com/news/chicago-news/organization-make-plea-for-help-as-more-afghan-refugees-expected-in-illinois/](http://wgntv.com/news/chicago-news/organization-make-plea-for-help-as-more-afghan-refugees-expected-in-illinois/).

The situation continues to evolve and Catholic Charities continues to serve. We are still fundraising for this devastating humanitarian crisis. Please consider making a gift to support our refugee services. Catholic Charities’ goal is \$500,000, which will allow us to resettle and prepare refugee families for a safe, successful life in the United States.

You are invited to attend the Thanksgiving Day Mass at St. Mary’s, which will be offered at 9:00am. The Thanksgiving Day collection is earmarked for the Afghan Refugee Ministry of Catholic Charities. The Parish Council and the Parish Staff have endorsed this effort and are trusting in your generous response.

You may use the **GiveCentral** portal to make a donation electronically or the Thanksgiving Day offertory envelope mailed to parishioners. Thank you most sincerely for your prayers and your generous financial support of our brothers and sisters, refugees in America.

This weekend some of our Scouts will be happily taking orders for poinsettias. You can speak to the Scouts after Mass. If the weather is inclement, they will be in the Church Community Room.

May God bless you with a loving and grateful heart!