

Statement of Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville, KY  
President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
On Syrian Refugee Crisis

September 10, 2015

In recent days, we have seen reports about and pictures of thousands of refugees from the Middle East, primarily Syrians fleeing the conflict in their nation, fleeing into Europe in search of protection. These images have captured the world's attention and sympathy. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has asked Catholics in Europe to respond to the needs of the refugees streaming into Europe and, throughout his papacy, has consistently called upon the world to protect refugees and other persons on the move.

As president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge all Catholics in the United States and others of good will to express openness and welcome to these refugees, who are escaping desperate situations in order to survive. Regardless of their religious affiliation or national origin, these refugees are all human persons—made in the image of God, bearing inherent dignity, and deserving our respect and care and protection by law from persecution.

I express my solidarity with the Holy Father, the bishops of Syria, the Middle East, and Europe, and all people who have responded to this humanitarian crisis with charity and compassion. I also encourage the U.S. government to assist more robustly the nations of Europe and the Middle East in protecting and supporting these refugees and in helping to end this horrific conflict, so refugees may return home in safety. The Catholic Church in the United States—with nearly 100 Catholic Charities agencies and hundreds of parishes assisting refugees to this country each year, and with Catholic Relief Services providing humanitarian aid to refugees in the Middle East and Europe—stands ready to help in this effort.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph flee the terror of Herod. They are the archetype of every refugee family. Let us pray that the Holy Family watches over the thousands of refugee families in Europe and beyond at this time.

Source:

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:  
<http://www.usccb.org/news/2015/15-127.cfm>