

## Middle Eastern Family Fleeing Violence and Political Oppression Seeks Refuge

*“Lord, when did we see **You** hungry or thirsty  
or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison,  
and not minister to your needs?”  
Matthew 25:44*



*Flight into Egypt, Lorenzo Monaco*

### Statement on Syrian Refugees and the Attacks in Paris by Bishop Eusebio Elizondo, Chair, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration

On behalf of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, I offer my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the November 13 attacks in Paris, France and to the French people. I add my voice to all those condemning these attacks and my support to all who are working to ensure such attacks do not occur again—both in France and around the world.

I am disturbed, however, by calls from both federal and state officials for an end to the resettlement of Syrian refugees in the United States. **These refugees are fleeing terror themselves**—violence like we have witnessed in Paris. They are extremely vulnerable families, women, and children who are fleeing for their lives. **We cannot and should not blame them for the actions of a terrorist organization.**

Moreover, refugees to this country must pass security checks and multiple interviews before entering the United States—more than any arrival to the United States. It can take up to two years for a refugee to pass through the whole vetting process. We can look at strengthening the already stringent screening program, but we should continue to welcome those in desperate need.



*Photo credit: Washington Post*

Instead of using this tragedy to scapegoat all refugees, I call upon our public officials to work together to end the Syrian conflict peacefully so the close to 4 million Syrian refugees can return to their country and rebuild their homes.

Until that goal is achieved, **we must work with the world community to provide safe haven to vulnerable and deserving refugees who are simply attempting to survive.**

As a great nation, the United States must show leadership during this crisis and bring nations together to protect those in danger and bring an end to the conflicts in the Middle East.

**As the Jubilee Year of Mercy begins, let us remember  
our call to perform the works of mercy:  
To feed the hungry. To give drink to the thirsty.  
To clothe the naked. To shelter the homeless.  
To visit the sick. To visit the imprisoned. To bury the dead.**

**Be the voice of mercy and love.....  
Tell Congress to WELCOME SYRIAN REFUGEES!**



From Migration & Refugee Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops:

“As Catholics and other people of good will are donating to help Syrian refugees abroad and volunteering to welcome them through the Catholic Charities and social service agencies across the United States, the US government has been painstakingly vetting Syrians for U.S. resettlement. The rigorous screening process is conducted over **18-24 months** by refugee and security professionals through multiple interviews and multiple security checks. Unfortunately, in response to the shock of the Paris attacks, a number of US Governors recently announced that they want to stop their states from resettling Syrian refugees. Some Members of Congress have even introduced legislation that would stop refugee resettlement altogether.

It is critical that public officials hear from their constituents NOW, including Catholics, as decisions are being made that could drastically impact the lives of Syrian refugees and refugee resettlement in the United States. The US has always been a haven for the world’s refugees and the Catholic Church plays a large role in that welcome. The US has a safe secure resettlement process through which we should continue that life-saving tradition.”

**Please take action TODAY: Call your Representative and Senators: 1-866-961-4293  
Email the House Speaker’s office: duppler@mail.house.gov**

Here are some helpful points that you may want to mention, but the most important point is your story and why your community wants to welcome Syrian refugees!

- ◆ Welcoming refugees is the American way and a part of the Catholic Christian calling.
- ◆ The US government handpicks the refugees who resettle here, and refugees are the most thoroughly vetted people to come to the United States.
- ◆ All refugees resettled in the United States undergo rigorous security screenings by the Department of Homeland Security, FBI, Department of Defense and multiple intelligence agencies, including biometric checks, forensic testing, medical screenings and in-person interviews.
- ◆ This is not an either/or situation. The United States can continue to welcome refugees while also continuing to ensure national security. We must do both.

**Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities:**

**Monroe** 585-546-7220 Marvin Mich ext. 7021; MMich@cfrochester.org / Ruth Marchetti ext. 7099; RMarchetti@cfrochester.org

**Chemung/Schuylers/Tioga** Kathy Dubel 607-734-9784 ext. 2135; KDubel@dor.org

**Cayuga/Ontario/Seneca/Yates** George Payne 315-789-2235 ext. 113; GPayne@dor.org

**Tompkins** Laurie Konwinski 607-272-5062 ext. 12; LKonwinski@dor.org

**Livingston** Tabitha Brewster 585-658-4466 ext. 13; TBrewster@dor.org

**Steuben** Lynda Lowin 607-776-8085 ext. 217; LLowin@dor.org

**Wayne** Peter Dohr 315-331-4867; PDohr@dor.org

**Diocesan Life Issues Coordinator:** Suzanne Stack 585-328-3210 ext. 1304; SStack@dor.org