

Justice, Peace and Life

August 2016

“Our world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War... We must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation. To respond in a way which is always humane, just and fraternal. We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays: to discard whatever proves troublesome. Let us remember the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Mt 7:12).”

-Pope Francis, Address to United States Congress

Solidarity with the Victims of War

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services are calling on U.S. Catholics to advocate with their members of Congress to address the horrific suffering of the Syrian people. During the five years of civil war, an estimated **400,000 people** have perished in the fighting among the warring factions of the Assad regime and its allies, anti-government forces and their allies, and ISIL. U.S.-led airstrikes on Syria have killed thousands of combatants and hundreds of non-combatant civilians. According to the U.N. High Commissioner for refugees, **four million Syrians have fled their homeland.**

Before Congress reconvenes in September to work on the 2017 federal budget, make your voice heard.

Ask your Senators and Representative:

- *to support robust funding for humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees,
- *to increase the number of refugees allowed into the U.S., and
- *to work with the Administration on finding diplomatic solutions to end the bloodshed.

Call your members of Congress at 888-562-8232 and click [here](#) to e-mail them too.

From [Catholics Confront Global Poverty](#):

“In December 2015, the number of people fleeing Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan for Europe surpassed one million, with 70% arriving in Greece. Their dire situation drives them to gamble their lives, taking the increasingly deadly sea route from Turkey. In 2015, some 2,000 Syrian refugees drowned in the Mediterranean attempting to reach European shores. Others have become victims of trafficking, subject to abuse en route, or both.



Photos credits: Catholics Confront Global Poverty



Refugees are being stopped at European borders with nowhere to turn. Increasingly, Europe is closing its doors. The United States has only taken in 2,290 refugees since 2011, pledging to take in 10,000 refugees in 2016. For these refugees, returning to the violence and hardship they fled is unthinkable.

As they wait, we cannot. Our faith calls us to answer their need for shelter, food, medicine and education. But their suffering won't cease if war continues. As Catholics, we must work for peace by imploring our leaders to lead the way with diplomatic solutions to solve this global humanitarian crisis.”

Standing with Workers for Labor Day: *Farmworkers Call for Boycott of Wendy's Restaurants*

Put "labor" back into Labor Day weekend! As we head into September, remember the farmworkers in our diocese and around the country who are harvesting many of the fresh fruits and vegetables you're enjoying this season. Show your solidarity by supporting the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#), a worker-based human-rights organization of farmworkers in southern Florida.

CIW, a recipient of major funding and prestigious awards from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (a program of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops), has developed the [Fair Food Program](#) to improve the lives of farmworkers. It started with tomato pickers who labored under wretched and exploitative conditions. They recognized the tremendous buying power of the national food industry which demanded low prices from suppliers, thus keeping farmworkers' wages stagnant for decades. They organized a campaign that rallied national support to pressure the largest buyers of tomatoes, namely fast food chains and grocery stores, to pay a penny more per pound for those tomatoes.

This money goes directly to the farmworkers and has meant a 20% - 35% weekly pay increase for these workers according to the [New York Times](#). The program has also made great progress in improving conditions in the fields and ending abuse of workers.

Corporations that have signed on to the program include: Taco Bell, McDonald's, Burger King, Chipotle, Subway, WalMart, Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. However, the fast food chain **Wendy's** has not yet agreed to join the program. Moreover, they have stopped buying tomatoes grown in Florida altogether!



The Coalition of Immokalee Workers and its allies have reached the point of calling for a **consumer boycott of Wendy's restaurants**. This kind of consumer pressure has brought other corporations to agree to sign onto the Fair Food Program. It will take great consumer support to convince the Wendy's corporation, but **you** can be part of that effort.

You can sign the petition [here](#) stating that you won't eat at Wendy's until the company joins the Fair Food program.

You can print out a letter about the boycott [here](#) and bring it to your local Wendy's manager.

Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. James 5:4

Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities:

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

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

Cayuga/Ontario/ Seneca/Wayne/Yates Deacon Greg Kiley 315-789-2235 ext. 124; GKiley@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

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