



CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC CONFERENCE
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105-3784

MICHAEL C. CULHANE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEACON DAVID W. REYNOLDS
LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

September 22, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord,

As you know from news reports, Central American children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras have migrated to the United States, unaccompanied, in record numbers. This is due in large part to violence and poverty in their homelands. While not a new phenomenon, the number of children who are making the perilous journey alone has increased exponentially in recent times.

The sanctity of the family and the need to protect the vulnerable is an integral element of Catholic social teaching, particularly as evidenced in the January 2003 pastoral statement on migration of the US and Mexican Catholic Bishops, *Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*. The Bishops specifically address the plight of the unaccompanied child, noting this special population's heightened vulnerability, and the corresponding need to give them special consideration and care.

Therefore, in order to assist these vulnerable children, we have asked Catholic Charities in our dioceses to explore ways by which they can partner with other non-profit and governmental agencies to provide appropriate assistance.

We know that the issue of immigration has become a contentious one for many reasons. In the current situation facing children, however, it is time to put politics aside and respond to the dire circumstances faced by so many of them. Pope Francis, in his message to the Mexico/Holy See Colloquium on Human Migration and Development, urges all Catholics to be open and welcoming: "A change of attitude towards migrants and refugees is needed on the part of everyone, moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization... This humanitarian emergency requires, as a first urgent measure, that these children be welcomed and protected."

We ask that each of us embrace this spirit of "welcoming the stranger" as we seek to respond to this growing humanitarian concern. We do not have all the answers, but in obedience to the Gospel mandate to serve the least among us, we ask your understanding, prayers and support.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Leonard P. Blair

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford

+ Frank J. Caggiano

Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano
Bishop of Bridgeport

+ Michael R. Cote

Most Reverend Michael R. Cote
Bishop of Norwich

+ Christie A. Macaluso

Most Reverend Christie A. Macaluso
Auxiliary Bishop of Hartford

+ Paul P. Chomnycky

Most Reverend Paul P. Chomnycky
Bishop of Stamford