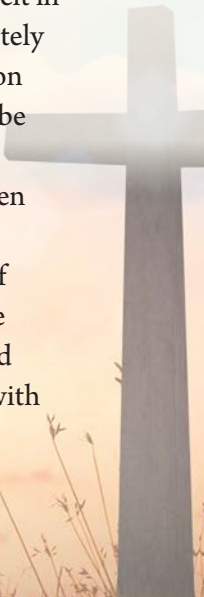
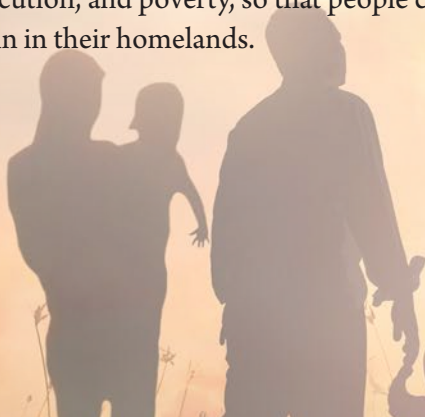


# Responding to False Claims About Catholic Organizations Serving Newcomers

## Claims Regarding Criminal Activity (e.g., Trafficking, Smuggling, Harboring, Child Exploitation)

- Catholic organizations cooperate in providing humanitarian aid with local, state, and federal officials. This includes working with law enforcement to identify and counter criminal activity, such as human trafficking, and assisting those who have been victimized by crime. Agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) often rely on Catholic organizations for their expertise and as trusted partners within local communities.
- Catholic doctrine distinguishes between persons and their actions. Each person—whether native-born or immigrant, documented or undocumented—is imbued by God with equal dignity. Catholics are compelled by Sacred Scripture and Church doctrine to recognize all as brothers and sisters and serve them accordingly. At the same time, the Church works to alleviate the root causes of forced migration, such as war, persecution, and poverty, so that people can remain in their homelands.
- Catholic organizations provide a range of spiritual, social, and legal services to newcomers throughout the country. These programs are frequently designed to assist newcomers with navigating legal obligations placed upon them by the U.S. immigration system and to protect vulnerable persons from trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Shelter, medical assistance, and other aid that meets people’s basic human needs are openly offered as acts of Christian charity rooted in love. Like all organizations that receive public funds, Catholic organizations are expected to adhere to requirements for the use of those funds, consistent with applicable laws and Church teaching.
- Unaccompanied migrant children are among the populations that can only be served as part of a formal program established by the federal government. Catholic organizations participating in this program are continuing the Church’s longstanding concern for this vulnerable population. Allegations that these same organizations are somehow complicit in the trafficking of such children is completely antithetical to their efforts, which focus on decreasing opportunities for children to be exploited. Catholic organizations do not decide if or when unaccompanied children are placed with a sponsor in the United States, but they do serve as a vital layer of defense against abuse by providing home studies prior to a potential placement and post-release services to children placed with a sponsor.



## Claims Regarding Financial Enrichment, Self-Interest, and Political Motives

- Catholic organizations have been serving newcomers throughout the history of the United States, well before public funding was offered for this purpose and regardless of who occupied public office. By 1920, 75% of U.S. Catholics were immigrants. In 1948, more than 30 years before the Refugee Admissions Program was established by Congress, almost 90% of Catholic dioceses in the United States had a resettlement director appointed by the local bishop to support the Church's resettlement of refugees.
- Accusations that the Church is betraying the United States, violating its tax-exempt status, or seeking new members through its ministries serving newcomers are nothing new. Anti-Catholic bias, political motivations, and misinformation have long undergirded these claims. Assisting newcomers, however, is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy and integral to Catholic identity. "For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 25).

- Since 2019, the federal government has provided funding to support the humanitarian aid offered by nonprofit organizations to migrants, given increased needs along the U.S.-Mexico border and in the interior of the United States. Some Catholic organizations have applied for and received this funding, just as some receive public funding for their disaster relief efforts, to enhance the security of their facilities, to address homelessness, and for other legitimate ends. They do not profit from this type of funding, which can only be used for prescribed purposes.





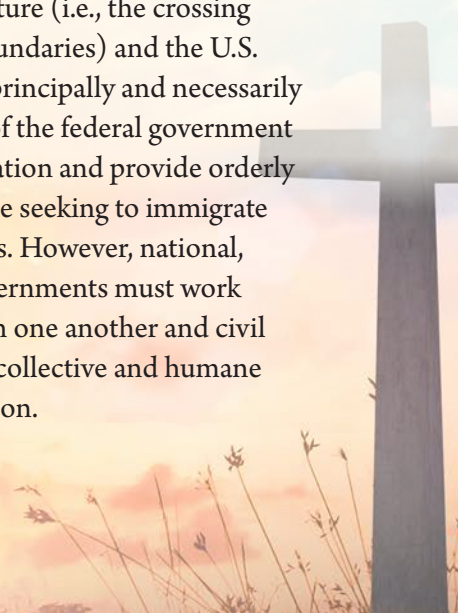
# Migration & Catholic Social Teaching

## Key Principles Derived from the Magisterial Teaching of the Catholic Church

- Persons have the right to find opportunities in their homeland (i.e., the right not to migrate).
- When the conditions necessary for a dignified life are absent, persons have the natural right to migrate to support themselves and their family.
- More prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome those in search of the security and means of livelihood unavailable in their country of origin.
- Countries have the right to maintain their borders and regulate immigration, consistent with the common good and with respect for the sanctity of human life.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection.
- The God-given dignity and rights of undocumented immigrants should be respected.
- Immigrants have a responsibility to respect the country that receives them.

## Irregular Migration and Immigration Enforcement

- Pope Francis has [stated](#) that “safe, orderly, regular, and sustainable migration is in the interest of all countries.” At the same time, Catholic teaching [recognizes](#) that it “is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop.” Threats to human life, therefore, may compel irregular migration. Above all, we must reject an oversimplification of the issue that disregards the human lives involved. One of the main differences between immigrating to the United States today and immigrating to the United States 100 years ago is that the process has become much more complicated and limiting, meaning most who immigrated during the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries could not do so today.
- Immigration enforcement should always be targeted, proportionate, and humane. According to its nature (i.e., the crossing of international boundaries) and the U.S. Constitution, it is principally and necessarily the responsibility of the federal government to regulate immigration and provide orderly processes for people seeking to immigrate to the United States. However, national, state, and local governments must work collaboratively with one another and civil society to devise a collective and humane response to migration.



## Immigration Reform

- As recognized by the Church for decades, the current immigration system is inadequate to address the needs of American families, employers, and communities, as well as immigrants themselves. Reforms and investments are needed to modernize/increase capacity at ports of entry, increase the number of/access to lawful immigration pathways, and establish earned legalization programs for long-time undocumented residents.
- The situation at the U.S.-Mexico border is unsustainable for migrants and communities alike, but it can and should be addressed without sacrificing longstanding, life-saving humanitarian protections, such as asylum. Ultimately, no sustainable reduction in migration can be achieved without a long-term commitment to addressing its root causes. Looking only at the U.S.-Mexico border or the domestic situation ignores the realities people face in their countries of origin. Heavy-handed enforcement measures will not alleviate forced migration. Much more attention should be given to the myriad causes of increased migration, rather than simply responding to its symptoms. As Pope Francis has [acknowledged](#), “Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided; this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development.”

## Additional Resources

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2241](#) (USCCB).
- [Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](#) (USCCB)
- [Q&A on Catholic Ministries Serving Migrants and Refugees](#) (USCCB)
- [Human Trafficking, U.S. Policy, and the Catholic Church](#) (USCCB)
- [Justice for Immigrants](#) (USCCB)
- [Responding to Migrants and Refugees: Twenty Action Points](#) (Holy See)
- [Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking](#) (Holy See)
- [And They Shall Know Us by Our Love](#) (Catholic Charities USA)
- [Modern Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration: Notable Quotes](#) (CLINIC)

