

PRESS STATEMENT

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Montana Catholic Conference
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Statement by the Catholic Bishops of Montana on the Syrian Refugee Crisis

We, the Roman Catholic Bishops of Montana, write to express our solidarity with all victims of persecution and violence across the globe. Recent terrorist attacks serve as a reminder that terrorism is a grave threat and that all people of good will must stand together against such deplorable acts. The humanitarian crisis gripping Syria calls us to reflect on the fact that we are part of a global family and are obligated to help our innocent brothers and sisters as they desperately flee the brutality and oppression that threatens their very lives.

At this crucial moment, it is essential that we heed the call of Pope Francis to guard against a culture of indifference that dehumanizes those on the margins of society and regards them as problems or inconveniences. We must not surrender to a spirit of hopelessness that would tempt us to see a problem too great and without a remedy.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and state Catholic Conferences across the country have called for our nation to welcome those fleeing persecution in other countries, including refugees seeking asylum from Syria. We join our voices with theirs and strongly support these efforts believing that with proper screening of our refugee applicants and the infusion of state and federal dollars required to provide the necessary infrastructure to support refugee resettlement, we can provide for this most vulnerable population while continuing to ensure our own security.

Consistent with our history and mission, the Catholic Church in Montana will seek ways to assist incoming refugees and those who are in desperate need of assistance. As a nation, we must also recommit ourselves to do what we can to build peace in Syria so that those who flee today will tomorrow find a safe and secure home to which they can return.

We urge all Montanans to consider the plight of these refugees with an open heart, and learn more about the rigorous screening process potential refugees must undergo in order to resettle in our country. We also implore all persons of faith to pray that our lawmakers be filled with wisdom and prudence as they deliberate and seek a course that upholds the dignity of every human person and advances the common good.

Most Rev. George Leo Thomas
Bishop of Helena

Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel
Bishop of Great Falls-Billings