

**STATEMENT OF CALIFORNIA BISHOPS
ON THE TRANSPORT OF DISPLACED MIGRANT CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES TO CALIFORNIA**

In recent days, the people of our state have witnessed the arrival of hundreds of displaced people, mostly women and children, to various locations in Southern California. The Bishops of California wish to express our solidarity with these immigrant brothers and sisters who are coming to our state and to offer our prayer that God will deliver them to the safe environment they seek.

We also recognize our responsibility as a Church of compassion to come to their aid and help provide them with the practical and pastoral support they so need.

These children and families have journeyed to our country, fleeing violence and destitution in Central America. Sadly, their experience in California has thus far been marked by hostility and near chaos. They are exhausted, afraid and clinging to hope.

The gravity of this situation transcends politics; it is truly a humanitarian crisis that calls all of us, Catholics and others of good will, to respond with compassion and with urgent action.

The response of Catholic agencies and other community-based groups has already begun. Catholic Charities, working in collaboration with directly affected dioceses and other service organizations, is mobilizing to help these immigrants in centers of hospitality and assistance. Many individuals have contacted our parishes and social service agencies asking how they can help. This reflects the best of the American spirit.

We are particularly concerned about the safety and security of the thousands of unaccompanied children that have crossed our border, without a parent or guardian and without family ties to the US. They desperately need our help.

Federal officials believe that groups of migrants will continue to arrive throughout the summer. The most affected dioceses will be asking parishioners and others for donations of time and money. We ask you to respond to this call. In this critical moment, Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan reminds us of what we are called to do.

Federal, state and local government agencies also have a role to play in responding to this heartbreaking situation. We urge Congress to appropriate the resources necessary to care for unaccompanied children. We also urge opposition to the "fast track authority" requested by the

Administration that could send children back to the violence they attempted to flee without a proper hearing—and in violation of their rights.

We recognize the passion surrounding this issue. We call on all Californians of good will to express themselves with civility and respect, and to refrain from violence. We ask the Catholic community to join together in solidarity with these children of God, our brothers and sisters, to provide help and give them hope.

Our strength as a nation has always been a matter of the heart. May the heart of Christ guide the people of California to a just and compassionate response for these huddled masses of children gathered at our door.

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