

European Refugee Crisis: Seven Things You Can Do to Help

by Kim Pozniak of Catholic Relief Services

As the refugee and migrant crisis grows in Europe, Catholic Relief Services and our partners like Caritas are there on the ground, providing assistance to families in need. As the difficult images fill the news, many people and parishes have asked what they can do to help. Here are seven tangible actions you can take to make a difference in the lives of people who have left their homes behind due to violent and difficult situations.

1. Learn More

The more you learn about this crisis, the more you'll understand its underlying causes and can spread the word. Continued warfare in Syria, and violence in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, has contributed to the surge of refugees from those countries, while deteriorating economic conditions in places like Sub-Saharan Africa has led people to Europe in search of a better life.

Here are some good resources for you:

- CRS's support of Syrian refugees: www.crs.org/media-center/current-issues/syrian-refugees
- The Washington Post features 6 Syrians making the journey to Europe: www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/09/07/six-syrians-on-the-hardest-part-of-their-journey-to-europe
- Refugee or Migrant? From the United Nations High Commission on Refugees: www.unhcr.org/55df0e556.html

2. Donate

One of the best ways to help is through donating to accredited nonprofit organizations that are responding to the crisis. More than 90 percent of money donated to CRS goes directly to people in need. Donate now.

3. Fundraise

You can provide direct assistance by setting up a page to raise money to support our emergency efforts. Your support will ensure that we can provide immediate assistance, including food, water, access to sanitation, legal services, and medical care. Set up your own fundraising page.

4. Advocate

CRS is calling on the United States to continue and expand humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees, especially to countries in the Middle East that have for years been sheltering the largest number of Syrians and Iraqis, as well as to countries burdened by this new migration. Most importantly, the United States should lead concerted diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Syria. Read more about how our nation's leaders can respond to the crisis, and write a letter urging them to take up the cause.

5. Use Social Media

Follow and retweet @CatholicRelief, @CRSNews, @CBrennanCRS, @KimPoz, and @ngamer19 on Twitter

for the latest updates on the #RefugeeCrisis that's reached Europe. Also, share this image on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, or any other social media to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters.



(Find this image at <http://on.fb.me/1igFPLT>.)

6. Pray

Pray for protection for refugees—particularly those fleeing Northern Africa for Europe—as well as for personal transformation as we face the needs of refugees everywhere, by using this Prayer for Refugees.

7. Support Refugees in the United States

Although CRS works exclusively overseas, there are many ways to help refugees in the United States through organizations such as Migration and Refugee Services, your local Catholic Charities, or by volunteering to help refugees in your own area through local refugee resettlement centers.

Archbishop Kurtz Calls for Welcoming of Refugees Fleeing Syria

Statement of Archbishop Joseph Kurtz
Archbishop of Louisville, KY
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
On Syrian Refugee Crisis

September 10, 2015

In recent days, we have seen reports about and pictures of thousands of refugees from the Middle East, primarily Syrians fleeing the conflict in their nation, fleeing into Europe in search of protection. These images have captured the world's attention and sympathy. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has asked Catholics in Europe to respond to the needs of the refugees streaming into Europe and, throughout his papacy, has consistently called upon the world to protect refugees and other persons on the move.

As president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, I urge all Catholics in the United States and others of good will to express openness and welcome to these refugees, who are escaping desperate situations in order to survive. Regardless of their religious affiliation or national origin, these refugees are all human persons—made in the image of God, bearing inherent dignity, and deserving our respect and care and protection by law from persecution.

I express my solidarity with the Holy Father, the bishops of Syria, the Middle East, and Europe, and all people who have responded to this humanitarian crisis with charity and compassion. I also encourage the U.S. government to assist more robustly the nations of Europe and the Middle East in protecting and supporting these refugees and in helping to end this horrific conflict, so refugees may return home in safety. The Catholic Church in the United States—with nearly 100 Catholic Charities agencies and hundreds of parishes assisting refugees to this country each year, and with Catholic Relief Services providing humanitarian aid to refugees in the Middle East and Europe—stands ready to help in this effort.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph flee the terror of Herod. They are the archetype of every refugee family. Let us pray that the Holy Family watches over the thousands of refugee families in Europe and beyond at this time.