

# NEWS RELEASE



---

**COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT:**

Deacon Timothy F. McNeil, Chancellor  
402.558.3100 ext. 3029  
402.551.4212 (FAX)  
tfmcneil@archomaha.org

ARCHDIOCESE of OMAHA

100 N. 62nd St. • Omaha, NE 68132  
www.archomaha.org

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Archdiocese to join Pope Francis in welcoming and accompanying migrants and refugees**

September 6, 2017 (OMAHA, NE) – The Archdiocese of Omaha will join dioceses throughout the world in a global campaign being launched September 27 by Pope Francis in support of migrants and refugees.

The aim of the “Share the Journey” campaign is to create a culture of encounter in communities where migrants and refugees have come to build a better life. It also hopes to increase opportunities for migrants and communities to come together and learn about each other.

“Each migrant and refugee has a name, a face and a story,” said Archbishop George Lucas. “I join the Holy Father in urging Catholics in the archdiocese to welcome, know, and accompany our migrant neighbors.”

Pope Francis will launch the campaign by performing the “open arms” gesture at his Sept. 27 papal audience from St. Peter’s Square in Rome. The gesture is an invitation to everyone to “Share the Journey” with visitors in their communities.

Archbishop Lucas is holding a listening session with immigrants at the Juan Diego Center on Sep. 27 at 2:00 pm to hear firsthand their personal stories and experiences, and to assure them of the Church’s solidarity with them.

The archdiocese will support the campaign with a robust social media program. Parishes and schools will be given resources about migrants and refugees in the United States. The resources will give examples of how parishioners and students can get to know migrants and refugees in a more personal way.

Forced displacement of people is at the highest level since World War II, with more than 65 million people displaced around the world.

Welcoming immigrants is part of the Catholic Social Teaching and reflect the Biblical tradition to welcome the stranger. The archdiocese has been welcoming immigrants to northeast Nebraska since the 1850s and has been integral in helping immigrants integrate into American society.

Today, the archdiocese hosts many thousands of immigrants, who have left their native land for fair and rewarding employment, security and opportunities for their families.

Refugees are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who meet the United Nations' criteria of having a "well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religions, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Refugees, having suffered great loss, including loss of their homes, livelihoods, possession and oftentimes families, need assistance starting over in a new country.

###

Founded as a diocese in 1885, the Archdiocese of Omaha serves spiritual and human needs in a 23-county area of Northeast Nebraska. Through its 140 parishes and missions, the archdiocese reaches out to 227,000 Nebraska Catholics. With two Catholic universities, 53 elementary schools, 17 high schools and a parish-based religious education program within its boundaries, Catholic education enriches the lives of some 58,000 young people. The Archdiocese of Omaha is one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Catholic Charities and the Center for Family Life Faith Formation lead a network that ministers to the broadest and most fundamental needs of our community. Generous support to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal is symbolic of the collective faith that allows the Archdiocese of Omaha to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. [www.archomaha.org](http://www.archomaha.org)