



*The Voice of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago*  
By Monsignor Michael M. Boland

“*We Are One Family Under God.*” That is the theme of the 2015 National Migration Week (January 4-10), established 25 years ago by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops to highlight the Church’s teaching on migration. As our nation becomes increasingly polarized over immigration reform, perhaps we can use Migration Week as a turning point to open minds and hearts so that we may become the welcoming nation that God calls us to be.

The theme *We Are One Family Under God* beautifully and powerfully reminds us that no matter what our country of origin, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. As our Holy Father, Pope Francis, so eloquently stated: “Every human being is a child of God! He or she bears the image of Christ! We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected, and loved.”

Welcome, respect, and love are things that Catholic Charities is truly blessed to provide thousands of immigrants who seek our help each year. We welcome them at our doors and resettle them in communities where they become our neighbors; we respect the many talents and traditions they bring from their homeland to enrich our nation; and we show them love through the many services they receive from Catholic Charities as they work very hard to establish their lives in America. Whether it’s help with legal paperwork, learning English, finding employment, or meeting basic needs, Catholic Charities has helped weave newcomers into the fabric of American society for nearly 100 years.

Jesus taught us to care for the most vulnerable and weakened among us, and very often that means our brothers and sisters who have traveled from their native lands to make a better life in our country. Just as the Holy Family was forced to flee their homeland, most refugees and immigrants come to America out of necessity—they are persecuted, face escalating violence, or simply cannot find jobs in their own countries and desperately need work to support their families. In fact, the need for survival is so great that many immigrants are willing to expose themselves to perilous conditions, sometimes falling prey to human trafficking and smugglers engaged in violence and extortion, in order to find safety, protection, and employment in the United States. We as Christians and Americans offer solidarity and hospitality to those who are forced to take such drastic steps in order to preserve their human dignity and human rights.

Unfortunately, we are living in a time when our current immigration system is extremely outdated and makes it exceedingly difficult for foreigners to come here legally and provide the labor that our country needs, for families to stay together or be reunited, and often results in tragic and preventable violence and loss of life at our borders. Each day, Catholic Charities witnesses terrible suffering when parents are deported from their children, spouses separated from each other, and victims cope with the repercussions of physical and financial abuse that too often accompany immigrants’ road to the United States.

Catholic Charities is proud to stand with Archbishop Cupich and the bishops of our nation in calling for comprehensive immigration reform that strongly protects our national interests, but also reflects the Gospel message of Jesus and the values of our Catholic Social Teaching. As our country debates this controversial topic, it is my hope that our Catholic voice can be the tender reminder that immigrants are not a problem to be solved, but our brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected, and loved. After all, *We Are One Family Under God.*