

April 26, 2019

Dear Pastors:

During this Season of Easter and preparation for Pentecost, I would like to give you an update on the work of Catholic Charities here in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

Most services are delivered out of our offices in Albuquerque, such as caring for the children at our Children's Learning Center and ensuring adult learners are paving their path to a better life. Our ongoing assistance to individuals and families struggling with homelessness or financial crisis has begun expanding into Santa Fe. We continue to provide legal immigration assistance out of Santa Fe as well. In Rio Rancho and other parts of Sandoval County, we have increased our work in homeless prevention and rapid rehousing services. We also provide services to assist victims of domestic violence statewide.

When I joined Catholic Charities thirteen years ago, we assisted about 12,000 individuals. That number has grown to over 17,000 and we are on track to assist some 20,000 persons by year-end. This growth is not a good indicator of the health of our local communities. However, thanks to you, we are able to assist more families, more struggling individuals, and deliver the Gospel through actions rather than words.

What's new? This year we have responded to the dire calls for necessary help from our Bishops and our sister Catholic Charities agencies around the Southwest, as this manufactured disaster has unfolded on our Southern border with Mexico. Since late February, we have assisted over 500 folks coming to us on their journey to asylum in our country.

Who are we helping? The families are primarily from Central America and Brazil. Other agencies have reported families from additional countries. As you know, this is not without controversy. The horrifying conditions these families are fleeing and the ever-changing policies and procedures of our nation's immigration system are the chief causes of the crisis. **When will it end?** I wish I could predict the end of this crisis, but after Easter, our respite assistance capacity is now 500 folks a month! **How will we do it?** As long as there is the need to help our brothers and sisters, as long as your support continues, and as long as our amazing, committed volunteers respond to deliver this Gospel of action, we will continue our mission.

Why are we reaching out to potentially 6,000 additional individuals this year passing through our Archdiocese, beyond the 20,000 "local" neighbors we will help? Simply because we are called to by the Gospel, by Christ and by the Church. Political opponents of welcoming of those seeking asylum may say, "Don't take them. They spread diseases and represent a threat to our economy." Not only are these statements inaccurate, these objectors forget that 'they' were once us. History repeats itself. "They" are the grandparents of many, the unwanted immigrants of the past. Not to mention, 80% are Catholic, based upon the population statistics of their nations.

We have not stood still in time or service to the most vulnerable. There is certainly need for policy and comprehensive immigration law reforms. Until then, the Christian is called upon to relieve the suffering and hardship that is right before them. That is why we do it and will continue to do it.

Yours in Christ,



Jim Gannon
Chief Executive Officer

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