



DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 30, 2017

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Catholic Charities Affirms Support for Migrants and Refugees

Jacksonville, Fla. – Anita Hassell, chief executive officer and diocesan director of Catholic Charities Bureau, Inc. of the Diocese of St. Augustine, affirms today the agency’s commitment to welcome and assist the stranger to our land.

“We believe all people are made in the image and likeness of God. All people – including migrants and refugees – deserve our respect and compassion,” said Hassell.

To echo Pope Francis words: “*In recent centuries, millions of people came to this land to pursue their dream of building a future in freedom. We, the people of this continent, are not fearful of foreigners, because most of us were once foreigners. I say this to you as the son of immigrants, knowing that so many of you are also descended from immigrants.*”

The Catholic Church, once an immigrant herself, has long-welcomed those in search of better futures or fleeing from turmoil to the safety of American land. And through Catholic education and Catholic Charities, the Catholic Church has integrated generations of immigrants into American culture. In fact, the security, wealth and opportunity that makes this country great as a nation owes much to its immigrant children. More than 40 percent of America’s largest companies were founded either by immigrants or the children of immigrants.

“We owe a debt of gratitude to our immigrants for defending this great nation during its greatest times of need. America rightly boasts that it is a better country due to the contributions of its many immigrants,” said Hassell.

She adds, “Together with the Church, Catholic Charities seeks to be a bright light that stands out as a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people. We stand in solidarity with all migrants and refugees of good will, and call the public’s attention to their situation, their dreams, and their God-given human dignity.”

For more information, contact Michelle Karolak, director of Catholic Charities Refugee and Resettlement Program at mkarolak@ccbjax.org or call (904) 354-4846, ext. 226.

Note: Anita Hassell is in training through Wednesday this week. She will be available for interviews on Thursday, Feb. 2. She can be reached at ahassell@ccb dosa.org or call (904) 899-5500.

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