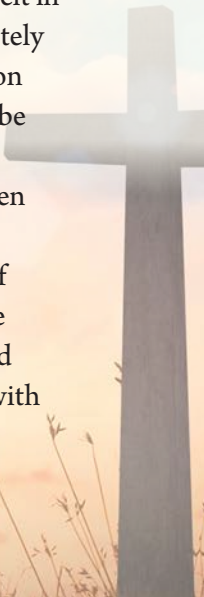
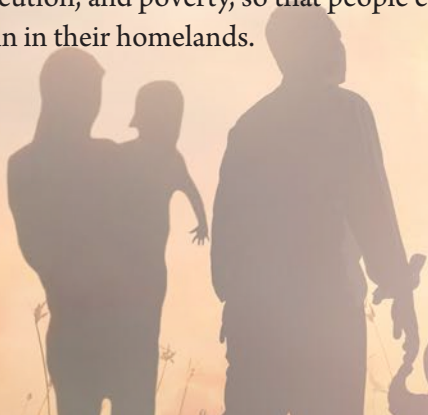


# Responding to False Claims About Catholic Organizations Serving Newcomers

## Claims Regarding Criminal Activity (e.g., Trafficking, Smuggling, Harboring, Child Exploitation)

- Catholic organizations cooperate in providing humanitarian aid with local, state, and federal officials. This includes working with law enforcement to identify and counter criminal activity, such as human trafficking, and assisting those who have been victimized by crime. Agencies such as Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) often rely on Catholic organizations for their expertise and as trusted partners within local communities.
- Catholic doctrine distinguishes between persons and their actions. Each person—whether native-born or immigrant, documented or undocumented—is imbued by God with equal dignity. Catholics are compelled by Sacred Scripture and Church doctrine to recognize all as brothers and sisters and serve them accordingly. At the same time, the Church works to alleviate the root causes of forced migration, such as war, persecution, and poverty, so that people can remain in their homelands.
- Catholic organizations provide a range of spiritual, social, and legal services to newcomers throughout the country. These programs are frequently designed to assist newcomers with navigating legal obligations placed upon them by the U.S. immigration system and to protect vulnerable persons from trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Shelter, medical assistance, and other aid that meets people’s basic human needs are openly offered as acts of Christian charity rooted in love. Like all organizations that receive public funds, Catholic organizations are expected to adhere to requirements for the use of those funds, consistent with applicable laws and Church teaching.
- Unaccompanied migrant children are among the populations that can only be served as part of a formal program established by the federal government. Catholic organizations participating in this program are continuing the Church’s longstanding concern for this vulnerable population. Allegations that these same organizations are somehow complicit in the trafficking of such children is completely antithetical to their efforts, which focus on decreasing opportunities for children to be exploited. Catholic organizations do not decide if or when unaccompanied children are placed with a sponsor in the United States, but they do serve as a vital layer of defense against abuse by providing home studies prior to a potential placement and post-release services to children placed with a sponsor.



## Claims Regarding Financial Enrichment, Self-Interest, and Political Motives

- Catholic organizations have been serving newcomers throughout the history of the United States, well before public funding was offered for this purpose and regardless of who occupied public office. By 1920, 75% of U.S. Catholics were immigrants. In 1948, more than 30 years before the Refugee Admissions Program was established by Congress, almost 90% of Catholic dioceses in the United States had a resettlement director appointed by the local bishop to support the Church's resettlement of refugees.
- Accusations that the Church is betraying the United States, violating its tax-exempt status, or seeking new members through its ministries serving newcomers are nothing new. Anti-Catholic bias, political motivations, and misinformation have long undergirded these claims. Assisting newcomers, however, is one of the Corporal Works of Mercy and integral to Catholic identity. "For the Church, charity is not a kind of welfare activity which could equally well be left to others, but is a part of her nature, an indispensable expression of her very being" (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 25).
- Since 2019, the federal government has provided funding to support the humanitarian aid offered by nonprofit organizations to migrants, given increased needs along the U.S.-Mexico border and in the interior of the United States. Some Catholic organizations have applied for and received this funding, just as some receive public funding for their disaster relief efforts, to enhance the security of their facilities, to address homelessness, and for other legitimate ends. They do not profit from this type of funding, which can only be used for prescribed purposes.

