

A Message from Bishop Cunningham



A Statement from Bishop Cunningham in Response to the Ban on Refugees

The executive order creating a 120-day ban on refugees' admission into the United States has shaken America to its very core. Refugees who have endured violence, racial and religious discrimination, and personal tragedy in their own countries and patiently followed a vetting system did so with the one hope that they would soon be free. But now, they are yet again delayed and detained. In our own diocese, [Catholic Charities](#) reports that 220 refugees who had already been vetted and approved to come to Syracuse are on hold for months.

Can any one of us here in America imagine leaving our homeland and our family members, traveling through unsecured routes under constant threat of capture or death to follow a dream to live a better life with our children? In our history, we don't have to imagine because our country was founded by people just like them.

"Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore, Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" These words by Emma Lazarus, in her poem "The New Colossus," are inscribed on the base of the Statue of Liberty.

This action is simply un-Christian and un-American. We cannot tolerate racial and religious injustice. We must stand with our refugees. Yes, screen vigilantly as we have, but never abandon our commitment to help others seek



Please join me on Sunday, Feb. 5 at 9:45 a.m. at the [Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception](#) as I celebrate a special ***Mass in Solidarity with Refugees and Exiles***. I will also be asking all parishes in the Diocese of Syracuse to pray for this intention: “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Mt 25:35).