

## Refugee Crisis Greatest Since World War II

Millions upon millions of people are on the move. Most are not terrorists; most are not criminals. They move because of war, poverty, natural disasters, climate-caused famine, gang, and domestic violence. This is a world-wide problem, a problem for nations, families, and individuals. The United States is one of those countries that is facing its own issue with refugees.

It's a complex issue and there is no easy solution, no "one size fits all" approach. The old ways no longer are working. Because so many are affected, so many economies, so many innocent children and families, it's important to ground any possible approach on basic moral values, on the human rights of every individual involved (on both sides of the border), and not by appeals to expediency and fear.

The Vatican and the Government of Mexico recently concluded a conference in which they laid out some principles that should guide any political solutions to this problem:

1. Pope Francis urged the conference to call for a *culture of encounter* to dispel the misunderstandings about both refugees and about the countries where refugees are seeking entrance. He called for an attitude that can reduce hostility and fear.
2. This can happen by people *meeting* each other where they are at, *welcoming* each other, *knowing* one another better, and *recognizing* our shared humanity.
3. Local governments, religious and private agencies can build this *culture of encounter* by promoting ways for migrants to be better integrated into their new homes. It's in the neighborhood and on main street that this integration must basically happen. The media is especially important in this effort because it can thwart the stereotyping of refugees by accurate reporting.
4. Because of the complexity of modern migration, the *culture of encounter* must also become global. No state stands alone. Nations need to adopt its outlook of solidarity through cooperation. One way is to share responsibility for ensuring safe, orderly, and well-regulated migration. The goal must be to make migration more voluntary and less necessary. The conference challenged the U.N. to amend its World Refugee Pact by a global proposal for Safe, Regular, and Orderly Migration.