



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Catholic Pastoral Centre
1155 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1W2
T 416.934.0606
www.archtoronto.org

MEDIA RELEASE – For Immediate Distribution

**Archdiocese of Toronto Launches “Project Hope”
\$3 Million Emergency Refugee Resettlement Campaign**

TORONTO (September 8, 2015) In recent days, shocking images and stories of refugees in peril have provided a wake-up call to the world. In response to this global humanitarian crisis, Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, announced today the launch of “Project Hope,” a special emergency appeal to respond to the tragic situation.

The 100-day campaign will have a target of \$3 million and a goal of settling 100 refugee families within the Greater Toronto Area as soon as possible. The effort will also require 100 volunteer committees to assist with settlement services. The archdiocese will prioritize refugees fleeing war and violence in areas of greatest need, including Syria and Iraq, regardless of religious affiliation.

The archdiocese established the Office for Refugees (ORAT) in 2009 to advocate and facilitate the welcome of refugees to the region. To date, ORAT has initiated the resettlement of 2,519 refugees, sponsored by 160 Catholic churches. Project Hope is above and beyond ORAT’s current efforts.

On Sunday, Pope Francis spoke of the crisis: “As we witness the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees that flee death in conflict and hunger and are on a journey of hope, the Gospel calls us to be close to the smallest and to those who have been abandoned.”

Cardinal Collins spoke of the need to take action: “May this initiative on the eve of the Year of Mercy, spark a culture of care, love and mercy in our community. To welcome the stranger, clothe the naked and feed the poor is at the heart of our faith. Let us put these words into action.”

Dr. Martin Mark, director of the Office for Refugees, remarked: “This crisis demands immediate action. Our priority is to engage as many people as possible in the financial and volunteer campaign to welcome refugee families as quickly as possible.”

Those wishing to support the campaign financially can do so in the following ways:

- Donate through the Archdiocese of Toronto website at: www.archtoronto.org
- By phone via credit card through the Development Office at: (416) 934-3411
- Through their local Catholic church, making cheques payable to – Name of Parish – Project Hope – Refugee Sponsorship

The Archdiocese of Toronto is Canada’s largest diocese, stretching from Toronto north to Georgian Bay and from Oshawa to Mississauga. It is home to 1.9 million Catholics and 225 churches, with Mass celebrated in more than 30 languages each week.

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Media Contacts:

Neil MacCarthy, Director, Public Relations & Communications

(416) 934-3400 x 552, neilm@archtoronto.org (416) 879-2846 (cell) www.archtoronto.org

Bill Steinburg, Communications Manager

(416) 934-3400 x 558, bills@archtoronto.org (416) 708-9655