



Office of the Bishop

October 31, 2022

“Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for Him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because He cannot be at home in it, because He is out of place in it, and yet He must be in it, His place is with those others for whom there is no room.” -Thomas Merton

Dear Friends in Christ,

It is a simple, good-natured thing when we see it. It puts a smile on our faces. When we deliberately make room for another. It can happen on a crowded elevator: “come on, get in, we’ll all squeeze together!” It happens around crowded dinner tables in our homes, we add extra chairs and plates to make sure all have a place at the table.

Sometimes it is easiest to do this with those we already know and love. What happens when we are asked to make room for a stranger?

There is a reality playing out in our border states as more and more immigrants and migrants seek entry into the United States. Our Catholic faith calls us to welcome the stranger, and from our location in the middle of the country, we are in a better position to make room.

We are expecting very soon to welcome a bus carrying 50-100 immigrants and migrants from El Paso, Texas, being transported here by the Annunciation House, a Catholic not-for-profit group that assists migrants and refugees. These individuals have already been processed and screened, and now are looking for help getting connected to family and friends, housing, jobs and basic needs like food and clothing.

There are several established and well-organized groups involved in welcoming these individuals, but I am encouraging a strong response from the Catholic faithful in our diocese to join the effort.

I know there are many in our diocese with a heart to minister and to serve. Please contact **Leyden Rovelo-Krull** (krull@diocesekcsj.org), director of the diocesan Office of Hispanic Ministry, to find out how you can help.

Additionally, *I am asking our parishes to take up an additional collection during the weekend Masses November 5 – 6* that can be used to provide basic needs for these men, women and children who seek a better life and an opportunity to earn a living and raise a family in a safer place. The collection will assist not only the individuals arriving on the initial bus but will also be used for any future groups that we welcome to our city. This collection should be submitted to the Diocese within two weeks of receipt by the parish.

Jesus came into a world with no room for him, uninvited. But, for those who made room for him, everything changed. When we make room, just a bit of room, for Jesus, for the poor and needy, for the stranger, then we will be changed. As the Lord tells us in Matthew 25, when we welcome the stranger, we welcome Him.

Making room for others is a sign of magnanimity, that is, acting with a big heart. It is also a key to the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.
Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph at The Catholic Center

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