4.15.21

Statement from The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, bishop of Erie, regarding the arrival of unaccompanied minors in the Erie area

Nearly 150 young children arrived in the Erie area where they will be temporarily sheltered until federal employees, who have been on site for several days, are able to help determine where each child will go next.

While it is a complex situation, our response as Catholics is very simple. By welcoming the least of our brothers and sisters, we are serving Christ. Indeed, it is a privilege.

I have been impressed with the outpouring of generosity within the community. People seem to understand that it does not matter where the children are coming from or where they are going. What matters is our response. What kind of hospitality, support and comfort can we offer during this moment in their lives, even if it is only with a welcoming heart or in the way we speak about them?

It is not hard to appreciate the challenges facing these children who find themselves thousands of miles from home, unaccompanied by their parents, perhaps not even knowing English. Consider parents, as well, awaiting news while desperately hoping and praying their children are safe.

The Catholic Church offers succinct teachings we can rely on in this situation, reminding us that all human life is sacred. For that reason, I very much consider this to be a moment when we can live out our pro-life convictions. The church also underscores that we are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic and ideological differences, and tells us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

May the Lord bless all those involved: the children, their families, those who are providing care, and our community as a whole.

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