

This is Google's cache of <http://www.americamagazine.org/content/all-things/open-letter-president-trump-director-jrsusa>. It is a snapshot of the page as it appeared on Jan 22, 2017 05:33:17 GMT.

The [current page](#) could have changed in the meantime. [Learn more](#)

[Full version](#)   [Text-only version](#)   [View source](#)

Tip: To quickly find your search term on this page, press **Ctrl+F** or **⌘-F** (Mac) and use the find bar.

[Skip to main content](#)



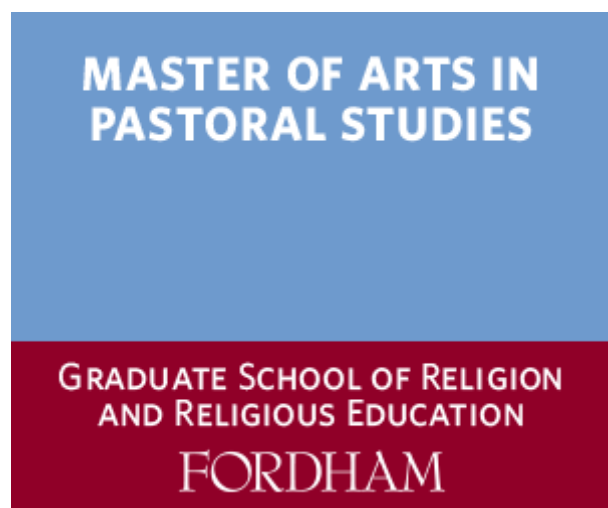
The National Catholic Review

- [Donate](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
  
- [Magazine](#)
  - [Current Issue](#)
  - [Archives](#)
  - [Subscribe](#)
  
- [News](#)
  - [Catholic News Briefs](#)
  - [Expert Voices](#)
  
- [Faith](#)
  - [The Word](#)
  - [Faith in Focus](#)
  - [Generation Faith](#)
  - [Pope Francis Homilies](#)
  - [La Palabra](#)
  
- [Opinion](#)
  - [Editorials](#)
  - [Columns](#)
  - [First Monday](#)
  - [Of Many Things](#)
  - [Washington Front](#)
  - [Vatican Dispatch](#)
  
- [Culture](#)
  - [Art](#)
  - [Poetry](#)
  - [Books](#)
  - [Film](#)

- [Ideas](#)
- [Theater](#)
- [Television](#)
- [Blogs](#)
  - [In All Things](#)
  - [The Good Word](#)
  - [\(Un\)Conventional Wisdom](#)
  - [Dispatches](#)
- [Media](#)
  - [Video](#)
  - [Podcasts](#)
  - [Slide Shows](#)
  - [SiriusXM](#)
- [Resources](#)
  - [Catholic Book Club](#)
  - [E Books](#)
  - [Teacher Resources](#)
  - [George Hunt Writing Prize](#)
  - [Web Only Articles](#)

[Login](#) / [Register](#)

## **An Open Letter to President Trump from the Director of JRS/USA**



[In All Things](#)

[Leo J. O'Donovan](#) | Jan 19 2017 - 3:00pm | 5 comments



Dear Mr. President,

Congratulations on your inauguration. Americans, whether supporters or critics of your candidacy, know that in the days ahead you will have to come to grips with many challenges that will affect not only the well-being of the people of the United States, but of all peoples worldwide. All Americans hope that you will address these issues effectively and in accord with the deep values of our country.

Not least of these challenges is the U.S. response to human migration. Today people are on the move in unprecedented numbers. Some move voluntarily, drawn by economic opportunities or family ties. Others—some 65 million and growing—have been forcibly uprooted by war, persecution, ethnic and religious strife, dire poverty, natural catastrophe or environmental degradation. Their number is equivalent to the entire population of Great Britain.

Our organization, Jesuit Refugee Service, knows well the struggles refugees face. We know how eager they are to live in safety, use their skills to regain self-sufficiency and prepare their children for a better future.

Refugees are survivors. As Americans, we share their values: the will to overcome any obstacle, to assert independence, to defend hard-won freedoms and to achieve success through sheer determination. This should come as no surprise because so many Americans have come to our country as refugees. In earlier days, these were Irish escaping man-made famine, Scots driven from their land, Jews and evangelicals escaping Soviet repression. In recent years they have included Vietnamese prisoners of war, the workers and translators who supported U.S. forces during our wars in Iraq, and survivors of conflict in Somalia, Myanmar and Syria. In the past four decades, about three million such refugees have been offered new lives in the United States under the U.S. resettlement program. They are weaving their lives into the tapestry of this country through the work of their hands.

Our country's welcome of these newcomers expresses who we are as a people. It is a sign of our commitment to the rights of refugees to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution. It reflects our desire to respond to the call of the Jewish and Christian scriptures to welcome strangers among

us, especially those in danger or great need. It is rooted in the recognition that all men and women possess a shared human dignity and, in the eyes of faith, are sons and daughters of a loving Creator who calls us together as one human family.

Though essential for those most in need, asylum and resettlement can assist fewer than 1 percent of the world's refugees. Most will remain in temporary exile until they can return home. This reality places a tremendous strain on the very poor countries that host the vast majority of refugees. It is essential that U.S. assistance to these host countries be continued and, indeed, increased. The United States should also intensify its leadership in diplomatic efforts to alleviate the underlying causes of forced migration, and to facilitate safe return when conditions allow. As Pope Francis said before Congress during his U.S. papal visit, "In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities."

Mr. President, the generosity of the United States in response to the needs of refugees is a source of our reputation as "the last best hope of humankind" and expresses our highest moral values. Our leadership in this effort will also benefit our country economically and politically by contributing to world peace and stability. In today's uncertain international environment we should seize the opportunity to advance human dignity through a revitalized refugee response. When you consider actions you might take to fulfill your promise to make America great again, remember the greatness of heart that is at the foundation of just and humane U.S. refugee assistance. Our nation and our world look to you for a magnanimous response to those who have been forced from their homes.

Respectfully yours,

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.

*Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J., is the Interim Executive Director of Jesuit Refugee Service in Washington, D.C.*

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

## [Show Comments \(5\)](#)

### Comments ([hide](#))

Tom Fields | 1/20/2017 - 3:14pm

Please rebuild the US Military and provide the security and strength to destroy the Islamic terrorist elements causing the scourge of forced migration. It is essential that U.S. assistance to these host countries be continued and, indeed, increased. The United States should also intensify its leadership in diplomatic and military efforts to alleviate the underlying causes of forced migration, and to facilitate safe return when conditions allow. As Pope Francis said before Congress during his U.S. papal visit, "In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we

want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities.” When you consider actions you might take to fulfill your promise to make America great again, remember the greatness of the US Military that is at the foundation of a response to those who have caused people to be forced from their homes.

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

Tom Fields | 1/20/2017 - 3:12pm

Please rebuild the US Military and provide the security and strength to destroy the Islamic terrorist elements causing the scourge of forced migration. It is essential that U.S. assistance to these host countries be continued and, indeed, increased. The United States should also intensify its leadership in diplomatic and military efforts to alleviate the underlying causes of forced migration, and to facilitate safe return when conditions allow. As Pope Francis said before Congress during his U.S. papal visit, “In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities.” When you consider actions you might take to fulfill your promise to make America great again, remember the greatness of the US Military that is at the foundation of a response to those who have caused people to be forced from their homes.

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

Lisa Weber | 1/19/2017 - 10:00pm

This is a nice letter, stating the truths well. Unfortunately, it is addressed to a man who does not read. To all appearances, he does not think either. It is a good reminder for the rest of us, though.

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

Tom Fields | 1/20/2017 - 3:16pm

...and Obama did so much to combat the terrorism and murder destroying millions of families--- right on!

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

John Walton | 1/20/2017 - 9:59am

@lisa -- in point of fact, Trump is a voracious reader and a very good listener. He also keeps a very sloppy desk.

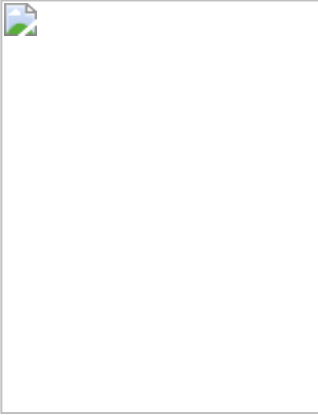
Fr. Donovan is to be praised for his letter. It's a pity that it wasn't addressed to Franklin Roosevelt in 1944.

- [Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

**Search form**

Search

Go



[Customer Service](#)[Giving](#)[Newsletters](#)[Jobs & Classifieds](#)

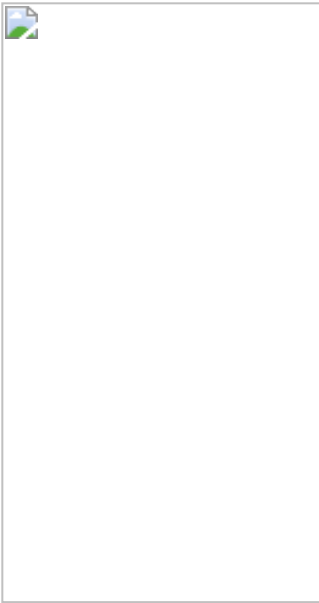


Come to  
Ireland to Study  
Theology at  
Loyola Institute,  
Trinity College  
Dublin



**SCHOLARSHIPS  
AVAILABLE**

The Loyola Institute  
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN



## Recently by Leo J. O'Donovan

[The Crucible of Culture](#) (December 22, 2016)

[In Living Color](#) (September 22, 2016)

[The Eggbeater Idea](#) (August 16, 2016)

[From Alexander to Augustus](#) (June 29, 2016)

[The Rapture of Seeing](#) (March 9, 2016)

[Like us on Facebook](#)



Copyright © 2017 America Press Inc.  
All Rights Reserved.

## Footer1

- [Donate](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [Jobs & Classifieds](#)

## Footer2

- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Writing Guidelines](#)
- [O'Hare Fellowship](#)
- [Summer Internships](#)