PRESS RELEASE

Oscar Romero Day of Commitment Connects Civic and Business Leaders with Hungry and Homeless in Philadelphia and Camden

Philadelphia, PA (March 23, 2015) Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap. and Sister Mary Scullion, R.S.M. of Project HOME were among civic, religious, political and business leaders from Philadelphia and southern New Jersey who visited homeless shelters, soup kitchens, food pantries and health clinics, to understand the personal and social dimensions of persons experiencing hunger, homelessness, and poverty in the region.

The Oscar Romero Day of Commitment was organized by the Hunger and Homelessness Committee of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 as part of its work to raise issues of hunger and homelessness in anticipation of Pope Francis’ visit to Philadelphia this September. Sponsored by the Holy See’s Pontifical Council for the Family, the World Meeting of Families is a triennial global event that seeks to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe and highlight its intrinsic value to the good of society. The gathering marks Pope Francis’ first visit to the United States.

Archbishop Chaput and Sister Mary Scullion administered street outreach to homeless persons in Center City while over twenty leaders including Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, Camden Mayor Dana Redd and Judge Gerald McHugh visited Saint John’s Hospice, Saint Joseph’s House and Saint Elizabeth’s Recovery Residence among other sites.

“We believe that if high-profile and influential persons in our community make a commitment to face-to-face encounters with Philadelphians facing serious economic struggles, we can help to put a human face on hunger and homelessness, and we can strengthen our efforts to advocate
for real solutions,” said Sister Mary Scullion, executive director of Project HOME and co-chair of the World Meeting of Families – Philadelphia 2015 Hunger and Homelessness Committee.

Romero, who was Archbishop of El Salvador during the worst years of war and oppression in the late 1970s and early 1980s, spoke out vigorously for the rights and dignity of poor Salvadorans. Last month, Pope Francis named the Archbishop Oscar Romero a martyr for the Catholic faith. He will be beatified on May 23, 2015 in San Salvador - the final step before being canonized a saint of the Roman Catholic Church.

“As Philadelphia readies itself for the visit of Pope Francis later this year, the witness of Oscar Romero is worth remembering,” said Archbishop Charles J. Chaput. “As a voice for love and justice, he speaks to all of us. Even here in our own local communities, we have brothers and sisters whose cries of poverty and abandonment rise up to heaven.”

###

**About World Meetings of Families**
Beginning with 1994, The Year of the Family, the Pontifical Council for the Family has been responsible for organizing the World Meetings of Families in Rome (1994); Rio de Janeiro (1997); Rome (2000); Manila (2003); Valencia (2006); Mexico City (2009); Milan (2012); and now, Philadelphia (2015). Since its inception by Saint John Paul II, the World Meeting of Families has sought to strengthen the sacred bonds of family across the globe.

**About Project HOME**
The mission of the Project HOME community is to empower adults, children, and families to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty, to alleviate the underlying causes of poverty, and to enable all of us to attain our fullest potential as individuals and as members of the broader society. We strive to create a safe and respectful environment where we support each other in our struggles for self-esteem, recovery, and the confidence to move toward self-actualization.