



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**ON EVE OF POPE FRANCIS' VISIT, MAYOR DE BLASIO AND CARDINAL DOLAN ANNOUNCE
ARCHDIOCESE TO PROVIDE BEDS WITH SOCIAL SERVICES TO CITY PROGRAM FOR
STREET HOMELESS**

NEW YORK—On the eve of Pope Francis' visit to New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio and Timothy Cardinal Dolan will announce today that the Catholic Church will honor the Pope's visit by working with the City to provide up to 150 beds with social services for street homeless individuals by the winter. This is the first announcement resulting from work between the City and Archdiocese to leverage buildings in the Archdiocese portfolio that could potentially provide affordable housing and emergency shelters with services to homeless people in the city. The announcement demonstrates the Church's long-standing tradition to help the poor and the needy and represents the largest allocation of beds in the Homeless Services clergy initiative, *Opening Doors*.

"Pope Francis' visit is a time to reflect on our common humanity and obligations to one another," said **Mayor de Blasio**. "Too often, our city's homeless are stigmatized, ostracized, dehumanized, and we must remember that they are our fellow human beings in crisis. That's why I'm proud and humbled to announce today that Cardinal Dolan and Archdiocese are providing up to 150 beds for homeless New Yorkers on our streets. We must do all that we can to uplift those struggling and help get them back on their feet."

"I am pleased to join with Mayor de Blasio in this important collaboration to assist some of the most vulnerable New Yorkers who currently call the streets of our City their home. This continues the Church's long-standing commitment on behalf of New Yorkers through Catholic Charities and our parishes and schools to provide help and create hope in the lives of New Yorkers in need," said **Timothy Cardinal Dolan**.

"Faith-based organizations such as the Archdiocese are important community partners in our united efforts to uplift New Yorkers and combat inequality, poverty, homelessness and hunger. By leveraging underutilized properties in the Church, we can ensure more New Yorkers in need have a safe place to shelter and access crucial services to help rebuild their lives. I thank Cardinal Dolan for his forward-thinking, compassionate commitment to our homeless and for working with the City to connect more of these individuals with the support they need," said **Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito**.

"The support of the Church is extremely important in our efforts to reduce the number of people living on New York City streets," said **DHS Commissioner Gilbert Taylor**. "The compassion and dedication of faith-based organizations play a critical role in providing individuals with a safe place to sleep and necessary services that can improve their lives."

"We cannot deny the human crisis of homelessness in our city, just as we cannot deny our duty as New Yorkers to do all we can to meet this critical challenge of providing shelter and support to the most vulnerable among us. In dialogue with Mayor de Blasio, as well as our clergy and advocates, I have spoken about the vital role that faith-based organizations can serve in offering safe spaces with beds and social services for our street homeless. The announcement of the Catholic Church's partnership with the City to achieve this mission is truly welcome, particularly as Pope Francis makes his first visit to New York City. This announcement should serve as a call to action for all of our religious communities. I ask houses of worship in Brooklyn and beyond, regardless of

creed, to help us combat homelessness and to welcome the stranger among us," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**.

"I'm grateful to the Church for opening its doors to the neediest New Yorkers. Street homeless individuals are especially at risk in the winter, when a bed means not only a place to rest but also shelter from the cold. It's heartening to know that those in need can count on their houses of worship to help them get back on their feet and I thank the Mayor and the Archdioceses for their work to make these badly needed beds available," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

"I stand with Mayor de Blasio, the City of New York and the Church, in this faith-based participation in the 'Opening Doors program' to provide emergency shelter for the city's homeless population. As this is the epitome of Christ, when he ministered and said: 'For I was hungry and you gave Me food, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you brought Me together with yourselves and welcomed and entertained and lodged Me, I was naked and you clothed Me,'" said **Pastor Jay A. Gooding, a Superintendent of Churches in the Church of God in Christ**.

Over the past several months, the de Blasio administration has been engaging New York City's faith leaders about the use of unused space within their properties for sheltering the street homeless population. This initiative will open at least 500 beds, providing shelter and social services to New Yorkers in need. *Opening Doors* builds upon the City's ongoing efforts to add resources for the unsheltered homeless population. Last week, the Department of Homeless Services and the Clergy Advisory Council announced the creation of over 300 beds with services for street homeless by several religious organizations. Participants of *Opening Doors* commit to providing between 10-19 beds, dinner, and social services in unused or community space to unsheltered homeless residing in their specific neighborhoods. All sites will be open overnight, and some programs may remain open around-the-clock to provide daytime services.

The de Blasio administration has invested over \$84 million over the next four years in street homeless programming to expand outreach workers and clinicians on streets as well as adding beds in shelters for this population. The administration also recently started a multi-agency effort to address and clean encampments and areas where street homeless congregate to target services and outreach, and help move people off streets and into safe spaces.

Overall the de Blasio administration has increased the budget to address homelessness from \$5 billion to \$6 billion over the next four years, including funding to prevent homelessness, to move those in streets to shelter, and to helping those in shelter exit to permanent housing. In the past fiscal year, the City enrolled over 20,000 families – more than 62,000 individuals – into proven homelessness prevention program connecting families and individuals on the brink of homelessness to rental or legal assistance before they end up in shelter. Over 38,000 individuals have moved from shelter to permanent housing, of which 15,300 used the City's newly created rental assistance programs and exit pathways. Of the approximately 57,000 New Yorkers in shelter, over 40,000 are families with children. 30 percent of the heads of households of families with children in shelter are currently employed. 46 percent of the heads of households of families with children are employed or were employed within the past year.

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