



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Bishop David Alvarado and Episcopal Dignity and Justice Program Visit Announced**

SALINA, Kan. – Saint Francis Community Services (SFCS) is pleased to announce the upcoming visit of Bishop David Alvarado of the Diocese of El Salvador Aug. 30 through Sept. 7. He will be accompanied by the Reverend Irma Alvarado and by human rights attorney, José Lopez, Director of the Episcopal Dignity and Justice Program (PEDJ is the Spanish acronym).

SFCS began collaborating with the Episcopal Diocese of El Salvador in 2015. The partnership is helping to launch PEDJ to carry out the vision of the Church which addresses such issues as poverty and extreme levels of violence affecting children, youth, and families in El Salvador, a vision aligned with SFCS's mission. Among its core projects, PEDJ provides assistance to victims and promotes violence prevention, empowerment and entrepreneurship initiatives in high poverty, high risk neighborhoods. Building on this vision, SFCS is working with its partners to formulate active, shared responses to cross-border issues such as immigration and human trafficking through faith-centered and social services-oriented approaches.

Angela Smith, Director of Mission Engagement at Saint Francis Community Services said, “Issues like poverty, violence, immigration, and human trafficking are shared issues we can address more effectively if we work together. Our hope is that this visit will be an opportunity to talk about issues like these, how they connect us, and to educate our communities about how we can support peace and reconciliation efforts for the sake of all children and families affected.” Bishop Alvarado, Mr. Lopez, and Saint Francis will be available during this time for speaking engagements and other opportunities to share the story of El Salvador with those interested in learning more about pressing issues that are affecting our region. A forum titled “Immigration: Seeing the Connections” will be held at Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church in Kansas City, Kan., Fri., Sept. 2 at 5:00 p.m. and is open to



the public. There will also be opportunities for learning and sharing following a 10:00 a.m. English language mass at St. Paul's, Sun., Sept. 3 and at 4:00 p.m., leading into a 5:00 p.m. Spanish language mass.

In addition to the scheduled events in Kansas City, the delegation will meet with the Very Reverend Dr. Don Compier, dean of the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry (BKSM) in Topeka, Kan. BKSM is a collaborative venture of the Episcopal dioceses of Kansas, Nebraska, West Missouri and Western Kansas that provides theological education to future priests, deacons and lay leaders. Dean Don Compier noted, "It is a rare privilege to receive the visit of Bishop David Alvarado, Rev. Irma Alvarado, and PEDJ Director José Lopez from the Anglican Diocese of El Salvador. Many persons from their nation are coming to our part of the world. It is critical that we understand why. As they share the perspectives that emerge from their daily pastoral work and social witness, we will develop partnerships to promote the welfare of all the citizens of our shared hemisphere."

In the spirit of Saint Francis, the Episcopal Dignity and Justice Program seeks what Saint Francis taught—"to be instruments of peace."

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### **Saint Francis Community Services' Mission:**

**"Be an instrument of healing for children, youth, and families in spirit, mind, and body, so they live responsibly and productively with purpose and hope."**