



## What Would Lincoln Do?

*Our current political differences are no match for the divisions that led to the American Civil War, but lessons can be learned from that era.*

By Mike Hoey

The 2011 Annual Assembly of the Missouri Catholic Conference will pose the question: how do we unite a divided nation? It is the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War and so the assembly will consider what lessons can be learned from that tragic era as we face our own national controversies.

Our current divisions are not nearly as profound as those of Lincoln's time; no civil war looms on the horizon. But numerous examples of our incivility can be cited. It is in this context that an examination of the life of Abraham Lincoln can be salutary. Lincoln is now revered as one of our greatest presidents, but in his lifetime he had plenty of detractors.

More than 620,000 soldiers and sailors died during the American Civil War. Could the war have been avoided while still ending slavery? Not according to the abolitionist John Brown, who sought to incite a slave insurrection in 1859 by raiding the federal armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Just before his hanging Brown scribbled a note declaring: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land can never be purged but with blood."

In public lectures in Boston and Concord, Ralph Waldo Emerson proclaimed, "[John Brown] will make the gallows glorious like the Cross." (Privately, however, Emerson confided to friends: "We have had enough of this dreary business.") In the hours before his execution, Brown read his Bible, convinced he had been a righteous agent of a wrathful God.

For those who saw Brown as a martyr, politicians like Abraham Lincoln had made a pact with the devil by recognizing the legal right to own slaves in the existing states. Yet Lincoln was very clear in condemning slavery: "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." He opposed slavery's extension into new federal territories and believed that stopping its expansion would lead to its extinction, a goal he repeatedly avowed,

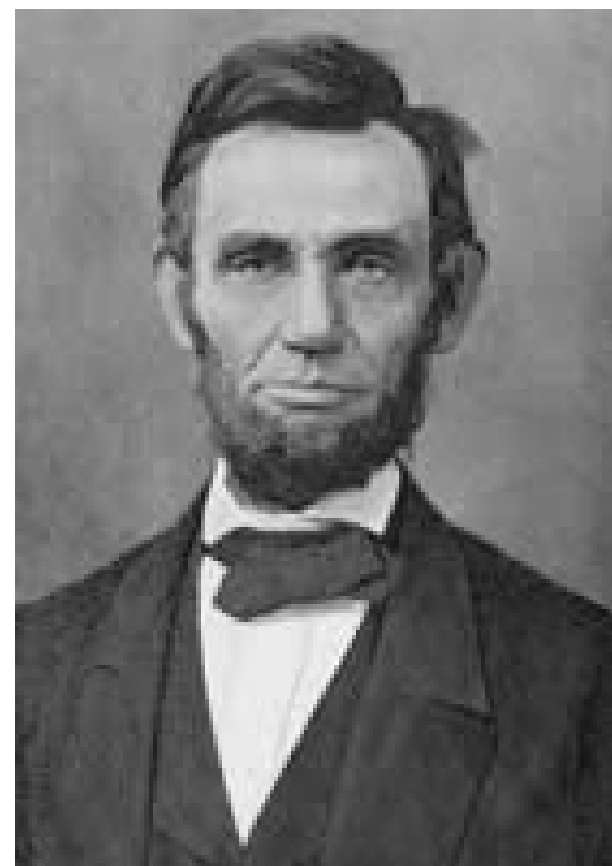
much to the chagrin of those who would tolerate slavery if that was necessary to save the Union.

Unlike a Thoreau at his pond, or a philosopher at his writing desk, Lincoln was a practical politician who had to negotiate, seek allies and develop consensus for his moral ideals. Some purists see politicians as a morally inferior class of people. They are always compromising. But are they really? Or are they advancing the good as best they can within the limits of the democratic process?

Lincoln presented a strong moral argument without being moralistic. He recognized the complexity of the issue and put himself in the place of his opponents. He knew how chattel slavery had become an integral part of the Southern economy. In a speech in Peoria in 1854, Lincoln observed of Southern slave owners: "They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not exist amongst them, they would not introduce it. If it did exist amongst us, we should not instantly give it up."

Opposition to slavery took many forms. John Brown saw himself as an Old Testament prophet called by God to end slavery by whatever means necessary. Abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison believed in nonviolence and sought the moral redemption of slave owners. Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), the bestselling novel of the 19th century, to stir sentiment against slavery. Harriet Tubman rescued more than 70 slaves, leading them north along a route that became known as the Underground Railroad. Lincoln sought to end chattel slavery through the court of public opinion and legal reform.

How do we respond to great evils present in our society? Catholic citizens seek to end great evils, such as abortion. Those efforts have taken a variety of forms, but have always been imbued with a spirit of peace and charity, an approach commended by President Lincoln in his second



inaugural address in which he called for a new spirit of unity: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ... ."

In his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, Pope John Paul II endorsed incremental steps to stop abortion when it was not possible to end it completely and observed: "This does not in fact represent an illicit cooperation with an unjust law, but rather a legitimate and proper attempt to limit its evil aspects" (par. 73).

Lincoln's life and the teachings of our church offer guidance on how Catholics can hold fast to their moral principles while working constructively for change within a democratic society.

*Mike Hoey is the executive director of the Missouri Catholic Conference. He will be presenting a workshop "Abolitionists and the Slavery Debate" at the MCC Annual Assembly.*

# Missouri Catholic Conference Annual Assembly, Oct. 1, 2011 State Capitol Building, Jefferson City, Missouri

*150 years after the Civil War, the same question: how  
do we unite a divided nation?*

## MCC Commemorates 150th Anniversary of Civil War

The 2011 Annual Assembly of the Missouri Catholic Conference will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War with workshops on a wide range of controversial issues that currently divide our nation.

The Missouri Catholic Bishops will be attending the Annual Assembly and will concelebrate a closing mass.

**Registration is free, lunch is free and a free Lincoln biography is available to the first 100 households to register (see the back page).**

Special activities include a youth track featuring a visit with Mr. Lincoln, a mock legislative session, as well as child care/activities for children ages 5 through 12.

In order for us to plan properly for the Annual Assembly, please register at [MOcatholic.org](http://MOcatholic.org), call 1-800-456-1679 or mail the form on the opposite page to the MCC. For more information about the Annual Assembly including parking, transportation and directions, go to the MCC's website.



## Featured Workshops

### *African Americans: The Civil War and Its Legacy*

As a border state during the Civil War, Missouri had governments representing the Union and the Confederacy, provided soldiers for both armies and endured intrastate warfare between neighbors. This divided loyalty affected all Missourians, including African Americans. This workshop will examine the impact of the Civil War on African Americans in Missouri and the legacy that remains after 150 years.

*Presenter: Gary Kremer, Ph.D., Director,  
State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, MO*

### *Abolitionists and the Slavery Debate*

Slavery was the great moral issue of antebellum America. This workshop will examine how different leaders sought to end chattel slavery. Special attention will be given to the differing approaches taken by the abolitionists William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass and John Brown. The religious underpinnings of the abolitionists will be explored. The strategies of the abolitionists will be contrasted with those of Abraham Lincoln. Are there lessons for our time?

*Presenter: Michael Hoey, Executive Director,  
Missouri Catholic Conference, Jefferson City, MO*

### *A Visit With Mr. Lincoln*

Go back in time in our nation's history to 1861-1865. The Civil War was raging, and Abraham Lincoln was in the White House. How could this tragedy have taken place on his watch, and what was his reaction? Meet the Rail Splitter himself and find out how his faith guided his actions and how he pined for the time that he could "bind up the nation's wounds." Ample time will be given for questions.

*Presenter: Mark Rehagen, member of the  
Association of Lincoln Presenters (ALP)  
and regular attendee of the ALP annual  
conferences, Jefferson City, MO*

- **Separation of Church and State: Fact or Fiction?** Presenter: Tyler McClay, General Counsel, Missouri Catholic Conference, Jefferson City, MO
- **Views of Missouri Voters on Catholic Schools, Vouchers and Other Educational Issues.** Presenter: Brian Robert Calfano, Ph.D., Director of the Missouri State University Poll Research Center, Department of Political Science, Springfield, MO
- **Catholic Press: A Tool for the New Evangelization.** Presenter: Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop, Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
- **Predatory Lending in Missouri: How the Faith Community Can Stop It.** Presenter: Molly Fleming-Pierre, Policy and Development Organizer, Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO), Kansas City, MO
- **The Power of "We": Working Together in Credit Unions to Offer Ministry.** Presenter: Carole Wight, President, Holy Rosary Credit Union, Kansas City, MO
- **Can We Still Afford Social Security and Medicare?** Presenter: David Webber, Professor of Political Science, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
- **The Joplin Tornado: Responding to a Natural Disaster.** Presenters: Kyle Schott, Regional Director of Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri and the Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Bishop, Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
- **Justice by the Numbers.** Presenter: Michael Wolff, Former Missouri Supreme Court Judge and former Chair of the Missouri Sentencing Advisory Commission, St. Louis, MO



# Keynote Speaker: Father Michael Witt

The Missouri Catholic Conference will feature Father Michael Witt as its keynote speaker at the 2011 Annual Assembly. Father Michael Witt, associate professor of church history at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary in St. Louis, will discuss the divided loyalties of Missourians during the Civil War and how the conflict affected the Catholic Church.



Father Michael Witt was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Saint Louis in 1990. He holds a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University in modern European history and a master's in divinity from Kenrick-Glennon. He has served the archdiocese as an associate pastor, pastor and director of continuing formation of priests and the seminary as interim president-rector. He is currently director of the archdiocesan permanent diaconate office and pastor of All Saints Parish in University City, MO.

## Workshops continued...

- **Rural Sustainability Through Growing Successful Businesses.** Presenters: Annette Weeks, Enterprise Facilitator and Sr. Christine Martin, NWMEF secretary/grant writer, Savannah, MO
- **The Truth about the Abortion Industry: Reflections of a Post-Abortive Woman and Life Advocate.** Presenter: Maria Thompson, post-abortive woman and life advocate, St. Louis, MO
- **Facing the End of Life with Dignity: Catholic Health Care for the Elderly, Terminally Ill and Infirm.** Presenters: Dr. Paul Tatum, M.D. Assistant Professor of Clinical Family and Community Medicine, University of Missouri School of Medicine, Columbia, and Nancy Valko, RN, author and consultant on medical ethics, St. Louis, MO
- **What You Need to Know About Pornography.** Presenter: Robert Furey, Ph.D.; Professional Counselor, Private Practice, St. Louis, MO
- **Protecting Our Children: Human Trafficking in the U.S.** Presenter: Deidre Lhamon, Founder and President of The Covering House, St. Louis, MO
- **Where is God When Life Hurts?** Presenter: Jim Wirth, Ph.D., Human Development Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Springfield, MO

For complete descriptions of all the workshops at the 2011 Annual Assembly, go to [MOcatholic.org](http://MOcatholic.org).

## Schedule

9:30 a.m.	Registration
10:00 a.m.	Keynote Address, Father Michael Witt
11:15 a.m.	Morning Workshops
12:15 p.m.	Lunch (free)
1:15 p.m.	Afternoon Workshops
2:30 p.m.	Closing Session
3:15 p.m.	Closing Mass, Concelebrated by Missouri Bishops, St. Peter Church

## Annual Assembly Registration Form

Three ways to register:

1. Mail form to: Missouri Catholic Conference, P.O. Box 1022, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1022.
2. Register online at [MOcatholic.org](http://MOcatholic.org).
3. Call 1-800-456-1679.

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY.

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish & City: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # in family attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # preferring vegetarian meal: \_\_\_\_\_

- My children will attend the youth activities.  
Names & ages: (6th grade and up)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Child care

- My children will participate in child care.  
Names & ages: (5-12)

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Please rank your workshop selections (1-4):

- Abolitionists and the Slavery Debate  
 African Americans: The Civil War and Its Legacy  
 Can We Still Afford Social Security and Medicare?  
 Catholic Press: A Tool for the New Evangelization  
 Facing the End of Life With Dignity  
 The Joplin Tornado: Responding to a Natural Disaster  
 Justice by the Numbers  
 Predatory Lending in Missouri  
 Protecting Our Children: Human Trafficking in the U.S.  
 The Power of "We": Working Together in Credit Unions to Offer Ministry  
 Rural Sustainability Through Growing Successful Businesses  
 Separation of Church and State: Fact or Fiction?  
 The Truth About the Abortion Industry  
 Views of Missouri Voters on Catholic Schools, Vouchers and Other Educational Issues  
 A Visit With Mr. Lincoln  
 What You Need to Know About Pornography  
 Where is God When Life Hurts?

I have a disability and would like assistance.

I'd like to join the MCC Citizens' Network.

### Transportation

I am driving.

Will drive others.

I need a ride:

Bus from Kansas City or St. Louis

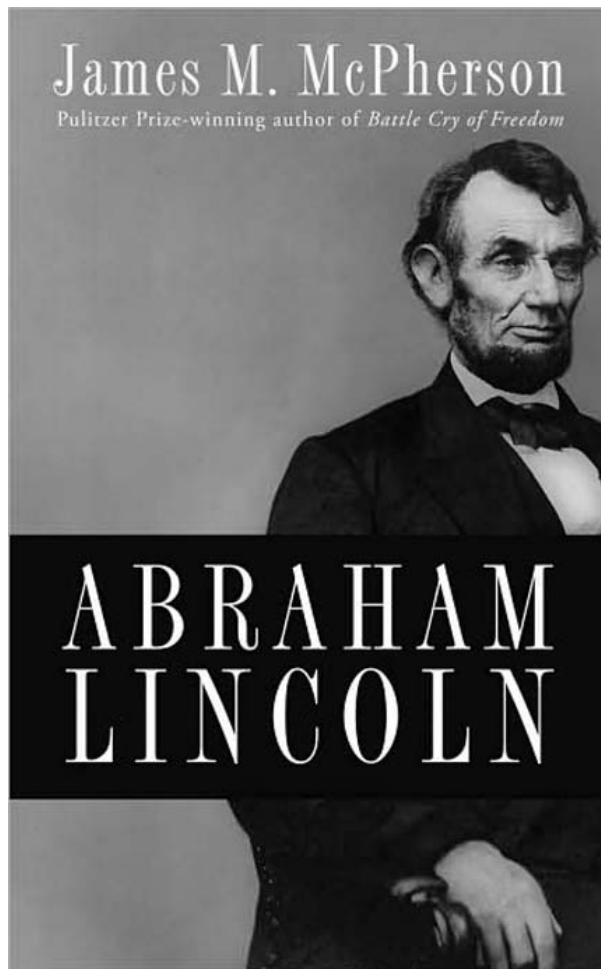
Add my name to a carpool list

# Free Lincoln Biography Available from MCC

The first 100 households who register for this year's Annual Assembly of the Missouri Catholic Conference will receive a free copy of Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James M. McPherson's short biography of Abraham Lincoln.

This attractive and slender hardback volume of only 77 pages recounts the life of Lincoln in clear and simple prose. The biography will not be mailed to registrants but made available on the day of the assembly.

*"James McPherson's Abraham Lincoln is a gem. This is the best very brief biography of our sixteenth president ever written."*  
— David Herbert Donald,  
Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Lincoln*



“Lincoln’s six years in New Salem were a formative period. For a time he drifted from one job to another: store clerk, mill hand, partner in a general store that failed, postmaster, surveyor. His partner in the general store drank up all the profits and then died. Although Lincoln was required by law to repay only his half share of the debts left by the store’s failure, he insisted on repaying all creditors in full. He wryly referred to this burden as his ‘national debt,’ but he also earned a valuable reputation as ‘honest Abe,’ a nickname that would stick.”

## Youth Schedule for MCC Annual Assembly (6th grade and up)

**10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

### Meet Mr. Lincoln

What would it be like to go back in time and meet Abraham Lincoln? Now is your chance to hear from Honest Abe himself, and find out what it was like to grow up in the 1800s. Learn how growing up in the wilderness without the benefit of a formal education propelled Honest Abe to become the sixteenth president of the United States. Bring your questions about his life and times!

*Presenter: Mark Rehagen, member of the Association of Lincoln Presenters, Jefferson City, MO*

**11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

### Legislative Scavenger Hunt

The State Capitol contains a wealth of history about Missouri and the legislative process. What a perfect place for a scavenger hunt! Don't miss this opportunity to have fun while learning about our state government. Prizes will be awarded.

**12:15 p.m. Lunch (free)**

**1:15 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

### Mock Legislature

Join other youth from around Missouri in debating controversial bills that have been discussed in the Missouri General Assembly. Youth are asked to follow all rules and procedures that Missouri Representatives and Senators follow day-to-day in the Missouri General Assembly.

## Truth and Charity Must Go Together

“Truth needs to be sought, found and expressed within the ‘economy’ of charity, but charity in its turn needs to be understood, confirmed and practised in the light of truth.”

Pope Benedict XVI,  
*Caritas in Veritate*, 2009

“With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in ....”

Abraham Lincoln,  
*Second Inaugural Address*,  
March 4, 1865