



Good News

January/February 2016 Vol. 35 Issue 1

Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri

2016 PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

PROTECT
HUMAN
LIFE

WELCOME
IMMIGRANTS
AND
REFUGEES

ADVANCE
SOCIAL AND
ECONOMIC
JUSTICE
FOR ALL

DEFEND
RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY



PROMOTE
EDUCATIONAL
OPPORTUNITIES

REFORM
CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

RESTORE
FAITH IN THE
DEMOCRATIC
PROCESS

UPHOLD
MARRIAGE
AND FAMILY

2016 Public Policy Priorities

In faithfulness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) seeks to create a culture that respects the dignity of all human life, especially the most vulnerable among us. Speaking together as the MCC, the Missouri bishops call citizens to a respectful discourse about the challenges facing our state and nation. In 2016 the MCC will support and give special emphasis to the following priorities.

PROTECT HUMAN LIFE

The MCC will work for a culture that protects the sanctity and dignity of every human life, from the child in the womb, to the prisoner on death row, to the elderly patient in the nursing home. The MCC will support legislation that studies the cost of the death penalty and seeks to repeal capital punishment, as well as oppose efforts to legalize assisted suicide. The MCC will support legislation to protect women from human trafficking. Finally, the MCC will support all efforts to ensure taxpayer dollars are not used to assist the abortion industry, including defunding Planned Parenthood and ensuring the University of Missouri stays out of the abortion business.

WELCOME IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The MCC will bear witness to the God-given human dignity of all immigrants and refugees, especially those displaced by war and persecution, reminding lawmakers of the right of people to migrate to other countries. The MCC will urge Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform and to permit refugees fleeing persecution to find a home in the U.S. after undergoing security clearances and being allowed to enter the country legally. The MCC will urge the General Assembly to preserve funding for resettlement programs that assist refugees in making America their new home.

ADVANCE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR ALL

Pope Francis calls for all people to hear the cry of the poor and to reform “unjust social structures” that deny the poor basic necessities and opportunities for social and economic advancement. The MCC will support: expansion and reform of Medicaid; an increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for the working poor; laws that promote a living wage; adequate funding of programs that assist the needy; and stronger consumer protections in the lending industry, including payday lending reform. The MCC will promote the healing of racial and cultural divisions while building vibrant and just communities that serve the common good.

UPHOLD MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

Family is the basic cell of human society and the foundation of civilized life. Presently, the institutions of marriage and family are threatened by a culture that no longer values authentic marriage and stable families. The MCC will support programs that encourage the formation and support of two-parent families

while also providing assistance to single parents and their children. The MCC will support programs that promote responsible fatherhood and parenting, assist victims of domestic violence and rehabilitate the perpetrators, and provide support services to families who are poor or have children with serious health problems or disabilities.

DEFEND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council affirmed the right to religious liberty and also affirmed that no person should be forced to act in a manner “contrary to his conscience,” (*Dignitas Humanae*, par. 3). The MCC will support non-discrimination against all people, including those seeking to peaceably and lawfully exercise their faith, be it Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or other religious tradition. In particular, the MCC will support robust religious liberty protections in all human rights laws.

PROMOTE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The MCC will support educational opportunities for all children, such as early intervention services for infants and toddlers, A+ college scholarships for graduates of public and private high schools, and financial assistance so families can choose suitable education for their children. The MCC will support repeal of Constitutional provisions (Blaine Amendments) that discriminate against children who attend private and religious schools.

REFORM CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The Catholic Church supports a restorative justice approach, which calls for the offender to be held accountable, and repairs the damage done to the victim while involving the community in helping the offender successfully re-enter society. The MCC will support meaningful reforms, such as ban-the-box legislation that gives ex-felons an opportunity to interview for jobs, and revisions to the sentencing of juvenile offenders in homicide cases to allow them to re-enter society when appropriate. The MCC will also support expungement bills that allow ex-offenders who have successfully re-entered society to put their past behind them.

RESTORE FAITH IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Catholic teaching declares that the purpose of government is to uphold the common good of all of the people it serves. This same teaching calls for the participation of citizens in their government. However, when public officials are dishonest or give priority to the demands of well-funded special interests over addressing the common good, citizens lose faith in the integrity of their government. The MCC will support strong ethical standards for public officials and measures that allow citizens to more fully participate in their government.

.....
To view bills the MCC has a position on, visit our website at www.mocatholic.org and click "legislative issues".

Missouri Catholic
Conference
PO BOX 1022
Jefferson City, MO
65102-1022

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED

Phone: (573) 635-7239
Fax: (573) 635-7431



Missouri Catholic
Conference



MOCatholic

Online at
MOCatholic.org

Board of Directors

Most Rev. Robert J. Carlson
General Chairman
Archbishop of St. Louis

Most Rev. John R. Gaydos
Executive Chairman
Bishop of Jefferson City

Msgr. Tom Reidy
Apostolic Administrator
Springfield/Cape Girardeau

Most Rev. James Johnston
Bishop of
Kansas City/St. Joseph

Most Rev. Edward Rice
Auxiliary Bishop
Archdiocese of St. Louis

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Jefferson City, MO
Permit #42

MISSOURI CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



Pope Francis' Address to Congress

Pope Francis addressed Congress during his U.S. visit in September. Here is an excerpt regarding politics and the challenges we face today.



"The challenges facing us today call for a renewal of that spirit of cooperation, which has accomplished so much good throughout the history of the United States. The complexity, the gravity and the urgency of these challenges demand that we pool our resources and talents, and resolve to support one another, with respect for our differences and our convictions of conscience.

In this land, the various religious denominations have greatly contributed to building and strengthening society. It is important that today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard, for it is a voice of fraternity and love, which tries to bring out the best in each person and in each society. Such cooperation is a powerful resource in the battle to eliminate new global forms of slavery, born of grave injustices which can be overcome only through new policies and new forms of social consensus.

Politics is, instead, an expression of our compelling need to live as one, in order to build as one the greatest common good: that of a community which sacrifices particular interests in order to share, in justice and peace, its goods, its interests, its social life. I do not underestimate the difficulty that this involves, but I encourage you in this effort."