



In faithfulness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) seeks to create a culture that respects the sanctity and dignity of all human life, especially the most vulnerable among us. In the light of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, the MCC and the Missouri bishops call government officials, legislators and all citizens to a respectful discourse about the challenges facing our state and nation. This agenda does not reflect all of the MCC's concerns, but those that require urgent action at this time. In 2019 the MCC will support and give special emphasis to the following priorities.

## 2019 Public Policy Priorities

- Protect Human Life
- Welcome and Accompany Immigrants and Refugees
- Advance Social and Economic Justice for All
- Uphold Marriage and Family
- Defend Religious Liberty
- Promote Educational Opportunities
- Reform Criminal Justice
- Restore Civility and Faith in the Democratic Process

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**MOCAN**

The Missouri Catholic Advocacy Network



## 2019 Public Policy Priorities

In faithfulness to the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC) seeks through education and advocacy to create a culture that respects the sanctity and dignity of all human life, especially the most vulnerable among us. In the light of the moral teaching of the Catholic Church, the MCC and the Missouri bishops call government officials, legislators and all citizens to a respectful discourse about the challenges facing our state and nation. This agenda does not reflect all of the MCC's concerns, but those that require urgent action at this time.

### Protect Human Life

Recognizing the right to life is the foundation for all other human rights, the MCC will defend against violent attacks on human life, such as genocide, abortion, euthanasia, experiments involving the destruction of human embryos or the use of aborted fetal remains, and the death penalty. The MCC will support a culture of life that provides alternatives to abortion for mothers who choose life for their children, and alternatives to the death penalty, such as incarceration that protects the public. *"It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop."* (Saint John Paul II, *Gospel of Life*, par. 101)

### Welcome and Accompany Immigrants and Refugees

The MCC will bear witness to the God-given human dignity of all immigrants and refugees, including the undocumented and 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 the DREAM Act, comprehensive immigration reform, and funding for refugee resettlement. *"Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age."* (Pope Francis, 2017 Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees)

### 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 basic necessities and opportunities for social and economic advancement. The MCC will support adequate funding for and access to Medicaid and mental health services, protection of social programs that benefit the poor, and stronger consumer protections, including payday lending reform. The MCC will also support healing of racial and cultural divisions while working to build vibrant communities that serve the common good. *"Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on."* (Catechism, par. 1908)

### 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 legislation and funding for programs that encourage two-parent families and provide assistance to single parents and their children; promote responsible parenthood; assist victims of domestic violence; and, help families who are poor or have children with health problems or disabilities. *"The importance of the family for the life and well-being of society entails a particular responsibility for society to support and strengthen marriage and the family."* (Catechism, par. 2210)

### Defend Religious Liberty

The Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council proclaimed that the freedom to exercise one's religious faith without threat of coercion is grounded in the dignity of the human person and that no person should be forced to act in a manner "contrary to his conscience," (*Dignitas Humanae*, par. 3). The MCC will oppose unjust discrimination against people of faith, including the targeting or registering of any particular faith, and will support religious liberty protections in all human rights laws. *"[T]he right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself."* (*Declaration on Religious Freedom*, par. 2)

### Promote Educational Opportunities

All parents have the right, and should have opportunities to receive assistance when necessary, to choose the schooling most beneficial for their children and which stands in accord with their moral and religious convictions. The MCC will support educational opportunities for all children in all school settings, be they public, private, or religious. The MCC will support financial assistance so families can meet their children’s educational needs, and repeal of Constitutional provisions (Blaine Amendments) that discriminate against children who attend private and religious schools. “As those first responsible for the education of their children, parents have the right to choose a school for them which corresponds to their own convictions.” (Catechism, par. 2229)

### Reform Criminal Justice

The Catholic Church supports a criminal justice system in which the offender is held accountable, the victim receives support, and the community assists the offender in successfully re-entering society. The MCC will support meaningful reforms, such as more judicial discretion in criminal sentencing and ensuring prisoners are not exploited for profit. “We believe that both victims and offender[s] are children of God. Despite their very different claims on society, their lives and dignity should be protected and respected. We seek justice, not vengeance.” (U.S. Bishops, A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice)

### Restore Civility and Faith in the Democratic Process

Saint John Paul II said that Democracy needs wisdom and virtue if it is to flourish. Pope Francis told Congress that the chief aim of politics is the common good. The MCC will encourage civility and bipartisan cooperation among elected officials, strong ethical standards for those in public office, respect for the rule of law, and measures that allow citizens to more fully participate in their government. “[R]esponsible authority also means authority exercised with those virtues that make it possible to put power into practice as service (patience, modesty, moderation, charity, efforts to share), an authority exercised by persons who are able to accept the common good, and not prestige or the gaining of personal advantages, as the true goal of their work.” (Compendium, par. 410)

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Messenger

A quarterly publication by the Missouri Catholic Conference

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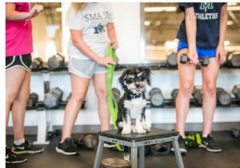
#### St. Louis Annunziata



**Annunziata**  
CREATING JOY

Diocese and educators as, but that we don't all change great work. The school is one of the most vibrant schools in the Archdiocese of St. Louis and is a testament to the power of prayer and faith. Through the guidance of our principal, Sr. Mary Ann, and the support of our faculty and staff, we have created a joyful learning environment for our students. Our students are not only learning, but they are also having fun. We are proud of the progress we have made and look forward to the future.

#### Kansas City/St. Joe St. Michael the Archangel



**St. Michael the Archangel**  
THE ARCHANGEL

Michael (Dignus), known as St. Michael, is a powerful and mighty warrior in the Bible. He is the leader of the angels and is often depicted with a sword and a scale. In the Bible, he is the one who led the souls of the righteous to heaven and the souls of the wicked to hell. He is also the one who is believed to be the one who will lead the armies of God in the final battle against the forces of evil. The school at St. Michael the Archangel is a testament to the power of faith and prayer. Our students are not only learning, but they are also having fun. We are proud of the progress we have made and look forward to the future.

#### Jefferson City Holy Rosary



**Holy Rosary**  
MEMORIES OLD & NEW

Years before the church, the Holy Rosary school was a place of joy and learning. The school was founded in 1954 and has since become a place of pride for the community. The school is a testament to the power of faith and prayer. Our students are not only learning, but they are also having fun. We are proud of the progress we have made and look forward to the future.

#### Springfield/Cape St. Eustachius



**St. Eustachius**  
PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

The school at St. Eustachius is a testament to the power of faith and prayer. Our students are not only learning, but they are also having fun. We are proud of the progress we have made and look forward to the future.



Missouri Catholic  
Conference



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## New York Passes Disturbing Expansion of Abortion Law

On the anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo signed an abortion law called the Reproductive Health Act (RHA). The RHA specifies that every individual has a "fundamental right" to an abortion and expands abortion protections in the state. The RHA allows abortion (1) if it is performed earlier than 24 weeks of pregnancy; (2) in an "absence of fetal viability"; or (3) if it is necessary to "protect the patient's life or health." This means that abortion is allowed without restriction during the first two trimesters. For third trimester abortions, decisions concerning fetal viability and protection of the life and health of the mother are to be made according to "the practitioner's reasonable and good faith professional judgment based on the facts of the patient's case."

The exception for health of the mother is not defined and can be interpreted to cover psychological, mental, and emotional health of the mother, as determined by the abortion provider. So, while the law does not technically allow abortion for any reason in the third trimester, in reality the health exception is broad enough to cover almost any late-term abortion in the state. The law also specifies that any "health care practitioner licensed, certified, or authorized" under New York's medical licensing laws can perform an abortion according to his or her professional judgment. This means that non-physicians (such as licensed nurse practitioners and physician assistants) can perform abortions. In addition, the RHA amends the definition of "homicide" in the New York penal code to remove conduct causing the death of an unborn child when the mother has been pregnant for more than 24 weeks. This means that only persons "born and alive" can be considered the victim of a homicide. All other references to abortion were also eliminated from the New York penal code. The RHA also removed a section of New York's public health law that required a second physician to be in attendance for all abortions performed after 20 weeks to provide "immediate care for any live birth" that was the result of an abortion. The now-repealed section also provided for "immediate legal protection" for children born alive and required medical records be kept of the efforts to care for such child. In a statement issued before final passage of the RHA, the Bishops of New York State expressed their "profound sadness" over the abortion expansion. "We mourn the unborn infants who will lose their lives, and the many mothers and fathers who will suffer remorse and heartbreak as a result." Archbishop Carlson released a statement in response to the bills. *"The recent actions by some state governments to advocate for the murder of children in the womb is representative of the loss of conscience by those leaders in government who are responsible for passing this legislation, no matter their faith. What is at stake is the ability to legally act to defend the innocents who are unable to defend themselves. The Archdiocese of St. Louis condemns these recent actions and appeals to those leaders who are in good conscience to act in defense of the unborn."*

Missouri Speaker of the House, Elijah Haahr, indicated this week that he was referring eight pro-life bills to committee. Stating that Missouri was "not New York or Virginia", Haahr stated that the bills would create "new protections for our most innocent."