

# Good News

*Bringing the light of Christ to Missouri.*



February 2012  
Vol. 31 No. 2

**In This Issue:**

**MCC Joins Other Faith Groups in Rally for Religious Liberty**

**Building a Culture of Life**

**For One Short Day**



**“To refuse to take part in committing an injustice is not only a moral duty; it is also a basic human right. Were this not so, the human person would be forced to perform an action intrinsically incompatible with human dignity, and in this way human freedom itself, the authentic meaning and purpose of which are found in its orientation to the true and the good, would be radically compromised.”**

**Blessed John Paul II,  
*The Gospel of Life,  
Evangelium Vitae,  
1995***

## MCC Joins Other Faith Groups in Rally for Religious Liberty

On Tuesday, March 27, St. Louis Archbishop Robert Carlson and Dr. John L. Yeats, executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, will join other prominent religious leaders from around the state at a Rally for Religious Liberty at the rotunda of the Missouri State Capitol building in Jefferson City.

The Missouri Catholic Conference (MCC), Missouri Baptist Convention and Missouri Right to Life are all working together to promote this rally. They will be inviting other religious organizations to participate.

This rally will protest the new mandate promulgated by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that forces employers, including the Catholic Church and other religious institutions, to provide coverage for abortion drugs, sterilization and contraceptives.

In a recent letter to parishioners, the Missouri Catholic bishops said: “We believe this new requirement signals a direct attack on our religious freedom.”

Mike Hoey, executive director of the MCC, observed that the HHS abortion-drug mandate sets a dangerous precedent. “Once the principle is accepted that government can override the moral convictions of individuals and churches,

then there is no reason why government cannot make further demands, such as requiring coverage for surgical abortions and other morally objectionable practices.”

This rally will call on Congress to pass S. 1467 (sponsored by Sen. Roy Blunt) and H.R. 1179 (co-sponsored by Congresspersons Todd Akin, Vicky Hartzler, Sam Graves, Billy Long and Blaine Luetkemeyer). Passage of these bills would overturn the HHS abortion-drug mandate.

The rally will also call on the Missouri General Assembly to pass SB 749, which is sponsored by State Sen. John Lamping (R-Clayton). This bill would put in state law a prohibition on government forcing employers, including religious employers, to offer health coverage for abortion drugs, sterilization or contraceptives. It would also make sure that individuals do not have to buy health plans that cover these items.

“Missouri will not wait for Congress to act,” said Mike Hoey, executive director of the MCC. “Missouri is taking the lead among the states in saying ‘NO’ to the new federal mandate.”

According to Hoey, “SB 749 will offer a way to make it known to Congress that Missouri citizens will not tolerate the

*Continued on back*

# Building a Culture of Life

By Tyler McClay

Like the challenge of living the Christian life itself, building a culture of life is not easy. It takes courage, and a willingness to be counter-cultural in what is becoming an increasingly materialistic and secular America.

I was fortunate enough in January to join two busloads of people from Jefferson City on the trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2012 March for Life. I was struck by the dedication of the many people who came from all across America – Texas, Vermont, Michigan, Pennsylvania – literally everywhere, to be at the March. I was also struck by the Catholic presence at the March. Everywhere I looked, I saw banners for this Catholic diocese or that Catholic school.

The energy of the people at the March was palpable, and it was encouraging to see so many people descend on the city of lawyers, lobbyists and politicians to deliver the message that life begins at conception and needs to be protected. Young people, babies in strollers, post-abortive women and even people in wheelchairs braved the rain and cold to march to end abortion in America. It was awesome

Most of us probably associate building a culture of life with opposing abortion, and yes, speaking out and opposing abortion is fundamental to this cause and we must do this. But we must also oppose and reject the use of contraceptives, in vitro fertilization, embryonic-stem cell research, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. Like abortion, all of these things are gravely immoral, and they are the pillars of the culture of death.

We also mustn't forget that building a culture of life requires us to speak out

and fight against poverty, the death penalty, prostitution, slavery, war and the economic injustices, which often lead people to seek relief through violence.

As Blessed John Paul II stated in the *Gospel of Life*, “whatever is opposed to life itself, ...whatever violates the integrity of the human person ...; whatever insults human dignity...; all these things are infamies indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury.”

To put all of this in some context, let's look briefly at several abortion statistics. Nationally, 20 percent of all pregnancies end in abortion. That means that one in every five pregnancies is terminated. In New York City, 40 percent of pregnancies end in abortion – twice the national average. The overall teenage abortion rate in New York City is a staggering 63 percent. As if that wasn't disturbing enough, consider this: among black teenagers in New York City for every 1,000 babies born, 2,630 are aborted, or 72 percent.

How do we explain this? We can blame Roe v. Wade and the abortion industry, and we should. The Roe decision and Planned Parenthood are part of

**“Nationally, 20 percent of all pregnancies end in abortion. That means that one in every five pregnancies is terminated. In New York City, 40 percent of pregnancies end in abortion – twice the national average.”**

the institutional culture of death. But we also must ask ourselves, what are we doing wrong as a society that causes this to happen? Are these kids without good education, without hope for a decent job, or even a decent life? What are the conditions that are causing such a culture of death in America's most prosperous city? I'm sure the causes are many and varied.

One thing that fosters the culture of death in our country is ironically one of the most treasured parts of our American way of life. Most of us would agree that as Americans we value our individual liberty. It is part of the fabric of America. I would suggest, however, that we are becoming obsessed with it to a fault.

Let me explain what I mean. If we look back at the Roe v. Wade decision, it is interesting to note that the Supreme Court grounded a woman's right to an abortion in the “right to privacy.” Even though the U.S. Constitution does not mention any such right, the Court ruled that an individual “right to privacy” is an essential part of the American idea of individual liberty. Thus a state does not have the authority to pass a law that makes abortion illegal in the first trimester of pregnancy, because a woman has an individual “right to privacy.” This, in my opinion, is individual liberty run amuck.

Our obsession with individual liberty shows its ugly head in our political discourse. Those favoring abortion rights say, “It's my body, my choice.” “Keep your rosaries off my ovaries.” Others, who oppose, for example, big government say, “Don't tread on me” and “Live free or die.”

*Continued on next page*

# Continued: Building a Culture of Life

Underlying both of these propositions is the flawed notion that individual liberty is greater than the common good and even, in certain circumstances, is greater than objective truth and morality.

The idea that a woman's so-called "right to choose" deserves greater legal protection than a child's right to live is an injustice and an abomination to God himself. As John Paul II said in the *Gospel of Life*, "God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one, in any circumstance, can claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being." "To claim the right to abortion, ... and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others."

At the same time, the idea that one individual should be free to live his life without having to care for others

They came from Vermont, Texas and New Jersey; from John Carroll High School in Tampa, Fla., the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Mich., and from Mount St. Mary's University in Emmitsburg, Md. They came literally from everywhere; pro-lifers with their banners, signs and backpacks, their matching hats, sweatshirts and neon-colored scarves. And in spite of a drizzling rain, they marched down Constitution Avenue, past the Capitol and the U.S. Supreme Court to bear witness to life. To tell the world that human life begins at conception, not at viability, or the "quickening," or when someone chooses to acknowledge it. They came to bear witness even though, it seemed, no one else was really listening.

or be accountable for the well-being of those less fortunate is no less an offense against our Creator. In a New Year's address in Rome, Pope Benedict XVI stated regarding the current financial crisis that, "The current crisis ... has its roots in individualism, which obscures the relational dimension of man and leads him to close in on himself, in his own little world, to take care of his own needs and desires above all, caring little for others." He added: "There is a need for charity and justice in difficult times so those who have more take care of those living in difficult conditions."

These life-affirming messages are completely consistent with Sacred Scripture. The book of Wisdom, for example, tells us that "God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. For he has created all things that they might exist."

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls us to a transforming love for all stat-

ing that, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Building a culture of life requires us to let go of our obsession with individual liberty: to be open to life in the marital act, to cease our assault on the unborn, to care for the stranger in our midst, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked.

In his encyclical the *Gospel of Life*, Blessed John Paul II made this appeal to each of us: "respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life!"

To that we should all say, "Amen and amen!"

*Tyler McClay is the general counsel for the Missouri Catholic Conference.*

## For One Short Day

They were young people, many of them, gathered in groups and marching together with their chaperones, singing and praying their rosaries. Walking in their midst were post-abortive women, handicapped persons in wheelchairs and the occasional prophet calling for the world to repent. The mood was somber, yet joyful. They exuded the type of energy that comes only from youth - cheering and chanting and challenging other groups to join in.

For one short day, the city of politicians and lawyers, the city of lobbyists and the U.S. military establishment was visited by more than a quarter of a million Americans who refuse to accept the contemporary conventional

"wisdom" that says a woman's right to choose deserves greater legal protection than a child's right to live.

For one short day, the Capital city of the world's greatest democracy was confronted once again with the unavoidable truth that abortion stops a beating heart, that the Constitutional "right to privacy" comes at the inexplicable price of a human life. And while the secular world might not have been listening, for those who braved the rain and the cold for one short day there was a hope that in the next generation, America will acknowledge that human life, yea even human life in the womb, should be protected and indeed is worth marching for.

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

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](http://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

Most Rev. Robert Finn  
Vice Chairman  
Bishop of  
Kansas City/St. Joseph

Most Rev. James Johnston  
Bishop of  
Springfield/Cape Girardeau

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

# *Continued:* MCC Joins Other Faith Groups in Rally for Religious Liberty

loss of their religious liberties.”

The Rally for Religious Liberty will begin at 10 a.m. with registration and the opportunity to visit state legislators to urge support for SB 749. At noon, there will be speeches from public officials and prominent religious leaders. Bishop John Gaydos of Jefferson City will offer the opening prayer.

The Missouri Catholic Conference will provide additional details about this rally in the coming weeks, including prominent public officials and religious leaders who will speak at the event. Those interested can go to the Missouri Catholic Conference’s website at [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) for more details as the date of the rally approaches.