



# Good News

March/April 2017

*Bringing the Light of Christ to Missouri*

## Making Missouri a Sanctuary for Life



By Missouri Catholic Conference Executive Director, Mike Hoey

A bill is moving in the Missouri General Assembly that would stop municipalities from passing pro-abortion ordinances. HB 174, sponsored by State Representative Tila Hubreht (R-Dexter), would also overturn a recent pro-abortion ordinance passed by the City of St. Louis. A similar bill, HB 989, has been filed by State Representative Phil Christofanelli (R-St. Peters).

The St. Louis ordinance is clearly intended to intimidate those who oppose abortion. The language is vague and ambiguous, but despite the claims of abortion activists to the contrary, a fair reading of the ordinance suggests several disturbing consequences:

- A landlord could be fined for refusing to rent to an abortion facility or to an abortion advocacy group like NARAL;
- A religious school could be fined if it chooses not to hire a teacher who publicly promotes abortion; and,
- Employers who do not include abortion coverage in their health insurance plans could be subject to lawsuits from persons claiming discrimination against their “reproductive rights.”

1967  
2017



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CONFERENCE

October 7, 2017  
St. Joseph Cathedral,  
Jefferson City

Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org)  
to learn more!



Some provisions of the St. Louis ordinance may run afoul of state and federal laws and could be overturned later by court rulings. But why is the City of St. Louis even going down this road? Why cram a pro-abortion agenda down the throat of citizens, many of whom view abortion as a profound evil? Why pass such an ordinance when it addresses no problem, but simply creates division and confusion, and further impedes positive efforts to renew the social and economic vitality of St. Louis?

Without the passage of legislation like HB 174, more municipalities could pass pro-abortion laws. It is part of the strategy of the abortion industry to establish "abortion sanctuaries" in cities around the country. In the upside down logic of NARAL and other pro-abortion activists a "sanctuary" is no longer a sacred place to flee to for safety, but a place where killing unborn children is not only legal, as it is now under federal law, but even a place that requires people who morally object to abortion to assist the abortion industry.

Tragic ironies abound. Abortion activists want to turn the meaning of the word "sanctuary" on its head. The word derives from late Latin and refers to a sacred place. In the Middle Ages people could claim sanctuary in a Church after committing a violent crime. Once protected, the person donned sackcloth and made a confession of his or her crime. Within 40 days the

person had to "abjure the realm," leaving the country for a new land. A sanctuary, in other words, was a safe place, a place of refuge where a person could start a new life.

Now, under its new meaning, a sanctuary becomes an abortion clinic and the city surrounding it. Because abortion is legal under federal law, citizens under the new ordinance are expected to not only recognize abortion's legal status, but to pay homage to the abortion industry by actively assisting in its work. This is a very illiberal position for people who consider themselves liberals. In fact, this ordinance seeks to repress the views of those who find abortion a profound evil.

When cities become intolerant of the rights of their own citizens, it is time for the state of Missouri to provide relief. Cities, after all, are political subdivisions of the state. Local ordinances should reflect the values and policies of the state of Missouri. The very first chapter of the Revised Missouri Statutes declares that: "The life of each human being begins at conception." (Section 1.205.1 (1))

HB 174 and similar bills merit support because they seek to ensure that the state of Missouri and all its political subdivisions will protect the sanctity and dignity of all human life, including defenseless unborn children.

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## Where's my bill?

Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) to view bill progress reports, which summarize bills the MCC is tracking, give MCC position statements, and show the bill's progress in the legislative process. The reports are updated regularly. Don't hesitate to contact the MCC if you have any questions about a bill's progress.

## Join MOCAN today!



Join MOCAN, the MCC's advocacy network!  
Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) for details or send us an email at [mocatholic@mocatholic.org](mailto:mocatholic@mocatholic.org)

# Missouri to Release Adoptee Birth Certificates IN EFFECT: JANUARY 1, 2018

## Adult Adoptees in Missouri Can Access Their Original Birth Certificates Starting Next Year

Missouri's new adoption records law will go into effect on January 1, 2018. This law permits adult adoptees who were born in Missouri to file an application to have their birth certificates released to them. As passed, the law also permits birth mothers and fathers to notify the Bureau of Vital Records of their objection to release of their identifying information. A birth mother or a birth father can sign a Contact Preference Form indicating that he/she wishes to maintain confidentiality. If only one parent signs the form, the original birth certificate will be redacted, removing that parent's name. If both parents sign the form, the original birth certificate will not be released at all. But birth parents must sign the form and return it to the Bureau of Vital Records *before* the adopted adult requests the birth certificate to maintain their confidentiality.

Any birth parent making an adoption plan going forward can also sign a Contact Preference Form at the time of the adoption indicating a desire for confidentiality. That birth parent can then proceed

with the adoption, knowing their confidentiality will be maintained unless they change their minds later and sign a new Contact Preference Form, updating their preferences.

Because adoptions before 1941 were not closed, lawmakers permitted adult adoptees from that period to access their original birth certificate starting on August 28, 2016. Birth parents can still request confidentiality if they submit a Contact Preference Form before the adoptee files an application form with the Bureau of Vital Records. Our next *Messenger*, which will be released in April in all four diocesan papers, is entirely devoted to explaining this new law and includes important information for any Missouri birth mothers and fathers concerned about protecting their confidentiality. If you have any questions about this law, please call the MCC at 573.635.7239 or send an email to [mocatholic@mocatholic.org](mailto:mocatholic@mocatholic.org), or contact the Bureau of Vital Records by phone at 573-751-6387 or by email at [vitalrecordsinfo@health.mo.gov](mailto:vitalrecordsinfo@health.mo.gov).

## ENTANGLED IN THE AMERICAN PRISON SYSTEM: SPEAKING UP FOR JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM



Our latest *Messenger Online* focuses on juvenile justice reform and proposed legislation that will raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction in Missouri from 17 to 18 years of age and prohibit the detention of anyone below the age of 18 in an adult jail, unless certified as an adult. The bills would also raise the age that a youth can be certified and transferred to the adult system except for the most serious offenses.

This *Messenger Online* includes three stories from individuals with personal experiences dealing with the juvenile justice system. The stories come from a prosecutor, a juvenile offender, and the parents of a child incarcerated as a juvenile. Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) to read this *Messenger Online*.



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MISSOURI CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



CELEBRATE  
50 YEARS  
OF THE MCC



Saturday, Oct. 7, 2017  
St. Joseph Cathedral,  
Jefferson City

The Missouri Catholic Conference, the public policy agency for the Catholic Church in Missouri, is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017. The MCC invites you to participate in a special anniversary celebration at St. Joseph Cathedral in Jefferson City on Saturday, Oct. 7. The event includes an address by Papal Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre. Since 1967, the MCC has been the voice of Missouri's Catholic Bishops and Catholic citizens in the halls of the State Capitol. 2017 will focus on celebrating the past accomplishments of the MCC and working toward future achievements together with Bishops, legislators and the citizens of Missouri. Visit [mocatholic.org](http://mocatholic.org) in the upcoming months to learn more about the keynote speaker and workshops that will be held at the 50th anniversary celebration.