

(Continued from page 3)

2000 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1996 has included some discussion of expanding gambling opportunities. CCK remains committed to opposing casinos or video lottery terminals.

Employers hiring documented refugees saw relief granted during the Session. Working with an employer in Louisville which has benefited from adding refugees to its workforce, a bill (HB 330) was successful in changing the definition of "Kentucky Citizen". The effect of the legislation is that now employers hiring refugees are eligible for state funded job skills training grants.

CCK STANDING COMMITTEES

- Ecumenism
- Education
- Family Life
- Finance
- Hospitals
- KLEA
- Long-term Care
- Prolife
- Social Concerns

Once again, despite intensive advocacy prior to the session a bill (HB 23) sought to remedy the regressive nature of the state income tax by creating a refundable state income tax credit. Low-income, working Kentuckians will continue to pay a disproportionately high rate of state income taxes. The good news, however, is that much attention and discussion has focused on the need for comprehensive tax reform. CCK continues to work in coalition for passage of pre-filed legislation in the 2002 session (BR 5) re-introducing a state refundable earned income tax credit.

NEW STAFF AT CCK

The Catholic Conference is pleased to add the Reverend

Patrick Delahanty of the Archdiocese of Louisville to its staff. Fr. Delahanty moves to the Conference after serving for more than a decade as the Director of Migration and Refugee Services.

Recognized for his long-time crusade in opposition to capital punishment, Fr. Delahanty is no stranger to the state Capitol. He has worked closely with the Conference for a number of years, successfully passing legislation to

CCK supported legislation (HB 23) for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund which funds low-income housing assistance was successfully passed. While the Trust Fund remains in need of a renewable funding source, all unclaimed state lottery prizes in excess of the first six million dollars will be directed to the Trust Fund (approximately \$5.8 million in 1998-99). Yet another innovative approach to find funding for low-income housing alternatives. CCK also successfully participated in lobbying for legislation (HB 347) requiring uniformed school closures in recognition of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Overall, the twisting and turning of the 2000 legislative session has re-affirmed the important role the Conference plays in monitoring and advocating for legislation which best serves all people of God and the common good of our Commonwealth.

Catholics in the Capitol

For the second Session in a row, CCK and diocesan staff across the state coordinated legislative advocacy visits with members of the General Assembly and their Catholic constituency from "back home". The effort has proven to be an effective advocacy tool as well as engaging the Catholic community in the legislative process.

prohibit the execution of the mentally retarded and limiting race as a factor in capital cases. As a Policy Analyst at the Conference, Fr. Delahanty will concentrate on migration and immigration issues, restorative justice and capital punishment.



Reverend Patrick Delahanty



1042 Burlington Lane
Frankfort, KY 40601

Work the Web



www.ccky.org



CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF KENTUCKY WITNESS

Volume 2 Number 1

June 2000

CCK Board of Directors

Thomas C. Kelly O.P.
Archbishop of Louisville

John J. McRaith
Bishop of Owensboro

J. Kendrick Williams
Bishop of Lexington

Robert W. Muench
Bishop of Covington

Jane J. Chiles
Executive Director

BISHOP OF LEXINGTON CALLS FOR RECONCILIATION

By J. Kendrick Williams
Bishop of Lexington

view the many ways in which our Beloved Creator continues to bless and sustain us.

This season of nature is also a harbinger for the liturgical season of Lent - the season that calls us to reconciliation. This year especially, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, asks us to recall and to repent of our past transgressions. Together, we enter the season where we will remember that which we wish had never happened.

The history of the Catholic community of faith has included many instances of injuries to others. An example is, of course, the fact that the Jews of Europe have over the centuries been herded into ghettos, forbidden property ownership, forced to convert, exiled, and decimated in pogroms. This history of persecution ultimately consummated in the unparalleled horror of the Holocaust.

To complicate this we know that history also shows us that few church leaders distinguished themselves in speaking out against the Nazi terror. This passivity and complicity of Catholics and other Christians played a significant role in the death of six million Jews and millions of other innocent people. This is indeed the season we must continue to remember that which we wish had never happened. We continue to be sorrowful.

In the light of our contentious past, I, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky, take this opportunity to call each of us to cultivate harmony and understanding between the Christian and Jewish people.

Borrowing from the words expressed in the 1998 document from the Holy See, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*, I quote:

'At the end of the millennium the Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (teshuvah), since as members of the Church we are linked to the sins

The first Spring season of the new millennium! We are awakened to the beginning of new life, new growth. Our hearts fill with gratitude as we

as well as the merits of all her children...It is not a matter of mere words but of binding commitment...Humanity cannot permit all that (the Shoah) to happen again. We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy, which the Jewish people have suffered in our century, will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people. We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians...but rather a shared mutual respect as befits those who adore the one Creator and the Lord and have a common father in faith, Abraham.'

In addition, we acknowledge that Judaism is not a proper object of Christian proselytism for as our Pope has observed, "Once having made a covenant with the Jewish people, God will

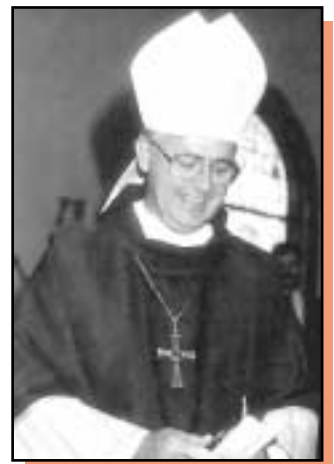
not revoke it." The Pope also emphasized the "permanent value" of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Jewish community that witnesses to those scriptures as sacred texts. (Holy Father's allocution to the Jewish Community of West Germany at Mainz, on November 17, 1980)

Today, I am calling my brothers and sisters of this diocese to participate in the following actions as we strive to cultivate a lasting Jewish-Christian relationship within this local community:

- **Read and discuss the collection of official Church documents on Catholic-Jewish relations.**
- **Participate in various dialogues which we will develop between the Catholic and Jewish faith communities in this diocese.**
- **Participate in a diocesan Prayer Service of Gratitude on the eve of Thanksgiving.**

I encourage each of you to develop other bridge building activities in your respective areas.

I pray that as we seek out ways of sharing our stories, our history, and our dreams we will deepen our respect and love for one another. +



I N S I D E

- **2000 Kentucky General Assembly Report**
- **KLEA Bus Subsidy Increase**
- **Day of Prayer on Kentucky's Death Row**
- **New Staff at CCK**

DAY OF PRAYER ON DEATH ROW

CCK staff had the privilege and pleasure to participate in a Jubilee year special event at the Kentucky State Penitentiary in late June. Responding to the Holy Father's call to visit the imprisoned, Sr. Chris Beckett of the Glenmary Order and staff from the Diocese of Owensboro organized the prayer service. All four dioceses in Kentucky were represented at the service.

Bishop John J. McRaith offered a special blessing on Paul and all in attendance noting that the body of Christ has no boundaries

Paul Stevens was honored for his 14 years of volunteer service as a Roman Catholic chaplain to the men at KSP. Warden Phil Parker

spoke glowingly of his respect for Paul and the value of Paul's ministry to the state's maximum security prison in Eddyville, Kentucky. Warden Parker's sentiment was shared by the men on death row as well as the men in the general population.

The service was attended by some 20 of the men presently on death row and another 50 in

protective custody and general population. Also attending were Paul's wife and two adult daughters. Men from the inmate population expressed their deep gratitude for Paul's commitment to their spiritual needs. A special thanks went to Warden Parker and Rita Brothers of the Owensboro Diocese for her effort in coordinating the women AIDS-Quilters of the diocese in creating 39 hand-made quilts for the men on death row.

Paul's example of unconditional love leaves its

mark on all who witness his living example of the Gospel values. Paul's story of reconciliation and spiritual



epiphany following the 1978 murder of his youngest daughter, Cindy, are widely known. Bishop John J. McRaith closed the service with a special blessing on Paul and all in attendance noting that the body of Christ has no boundaries.

KLEA When the 2000 session of the General Assembly closed on April 14th, it did so without the enactment of a non-public school parent tax credit. This second attempt to pass a tax credit met with nearly the same fate as the 1998 session: locked-up in the Appropriations and Revenue Committee. Entering into this session, however, KLEA felt a new confidence due to strong support by House leadership. Three members of House Leadership had signed on as cosponsors of House Bill 514.

In a creative approach to escape the grasp of the A&R Committee, a revamped tax credit was offered as a floor amendment to the State/Executive budget. This was the best and last chance at passage, but in the end House leadership mistakenly ruled the tax amendment not germane to the budget bill. This was not the case in reality, but it was too late in the process and the session ended. If the floor amendment had received a favorable ruling, the necessary votes were available in both the House and Senate.

It remains to be seen what impact the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Mitchell v. Helms* will have on public attitudes concerning the Constitution's Establishment Clause. KLEA is certain, however, that the general public is beginning to recognize that the focus of educating the public

does not need be limited to where a child attends school.

Unfortunately, yet another important issue was defeated primarily by the influence of the Jefferson County Teacher's Union. House Bill 681 sought to remedy an accidental oversight in drafting legislation during the 1998 General Assembly. Presently, non-public school students are denied participation in the state's Department of Education program - *School to Careers*. KLEA continues to seek an administrative solution during the legislative interim and if necessary will seek legislation in the 2002 General Assembly.

...the general public is beginning to recognize that the focus of educating the public does not need to be limited to where a child attends school.

KLEA is an organization made up of school parents and others whose mission is to secure financial support for non-public schools. KLEA is an active grassroots organization that includes school administrators, teachers, parents and volunteers all working together to ultimately benefit our children. Thanks for your continued help, support, and prayers.

THE 2000 KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 2000 General Assembly closed in a fury of last minute special conference committees, floor amendments and final votes. Changing leadership in the state Senate from a Democrat controlled chamber to one controlled by a Republican majority added intensity to the drama of the session.

Like many other advocates in the Capitol, staff at the CCK rate this session as productive, but wearied. Advocacy for the Gospel values and the common good of society in the public arena is an ever unfolding experience complete with joys and disappointments. CCK staff looks back on the 2000 General Assembly with pride and looks forward with renewed hope toward the 2002 General Assembly.

Several pro-life bills were introduced in the session, but saw little or no action.

Respect Life

The 2000 General Assembly produce no advances in legislation directly

affecting abortion or capital punishment. Both issues saw legislation introduced and then, despite coordinated advocacy efforts, flounder in committee. With respect to the abortion issue, members of the General Assembly found it difficult to pursue new legislation while legal challenges to laws passed in the 1998 session (Partial birth abortion/Informed consent) remain in the courts and unresolved.

Several pro-life bills were introduced in the session, but saw little or no action. Two bills attempted to revise Kentucky law regarding the personhood, or legal standing, of the unborn child (HB 378 & 379). A proposal providing legal protection, a conscious clause, for pharmacist (HB 489) who refuse to dispense abortifacients drugs also met with a disappointing end. In an attempt to address the abandoning of newborns, two bills (HB 367 & SB 188) were filed, but failed to be enacted. CCK staff was pleased when a bill (HB 450) requiring mandatory health plan coverage of contraceptive treatments and devices failed to be heard in the Senate Health and Welfare Committee.

Particularly disappointing was the failure of legislation ending the use of capital punishment (HB 514). Sadly, the General Assembly also failed to enact a prohibition on the execution of juveniles (HB 311) under 18 years of age. Polling data collected and analyzed by the University of Louisville prior to the session indicates that support for executions drops significantly when the sentence of life-in-prison without possibility of parole is an available alternative. One Senate bill filed late in the session (SB 325) seeking to impose a five year moratorium on executions also saw no action.

While capital punishment remains the law, many observers note a new and hopeful atmosphere among many members of the General Assembly. Several factors are attributed to this new openness which includes the possibility of executing an innocent person. Additionally, a year long public education and advocacy campaign by Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty called Abolition 2000 sought to change public opinion on the issue. The campaign

conducted public forums, organized a comprehensive legislative committee hearing before the Interim Joint Health and Welfare Committee, and placed numerous advertisements in media outlets across Kentucky featuring community leaders and citizens opposed to executions. The organizer of the campaign, Carl Wedekind, plans to continue the effort during the legislative interim. Abolition 2002 has already begun raising the necessary funds and is seeking a full-time Campaign Coordinator. Interested persons may submit a resume to KCADP via e-mail to patrickd@mis.net.

To its credit, the General Assembly passed a number of bills which enhance the quality of life for many Kentuckians. One significant bill signed into law (HB268) requires that health insurance plans offering mental health benefits must be on parity with physical health benefits. CCK staff successfully worked in partnership to include state funding (HB 218) for malpractice insurance expense of medical personnel in all 21 free health clinics across the state. Funding in the state budget totaling \$325,000 was included to operate a mobile health clinic based in rural Eastern Kentucky.

In a desperate effort to maintain consumer protections in health insurance law (primarily, guaranteed issue for coverage), CCK staff collaborated with Kentuckians for Health Care Reform to oppose legislation (HB 517) creating a "high risk" medical insurance pool for sick Kentuckians. Following the recommendation of the state's Commissioner of Insurance, the Governor supported creating this state-subsidized pooling of citizens with high-cost medical conditions.

Nonpublic Schools

The Kentucky League for Educational Alternatives

(KLEA) saw a significant increase in the State/Executive budget (court approved) subsidy for the transportation of nonpublic school students. A proposal creating a tuition tax credit for parents of nonpublic school

A proposal creating a tuition tax credit for parents of nonpublic school students failed after a wild ride through the legislative process.

students failed after a wild ride through the legislative process. Initially introduced as a \$500 tax credit (HB 514), the bill failed to be heard in the Appropriations and Revenue Committee. In the closing hours of the Session, the tax credit was significantly reduced and offered as a floor amendment to the state budget bill. Following a drawn out parliamentary debate in an attempt to kill the amendment procedurally, it was finally ruled as out of order. Had it not been ruled out-of-order, it most likely had the necessary votes for passage. CCK and KLEA remain confident that continued grass-roots advocacy and the favorable U.S. Supreme Court decision on computer and other resources further the effort on tuition tax credits.

Social Concerns

One major issue which CCK opposed never saw legislation introduced: Casino Gambling. Organized opposition among religious communities during the legislative interim assisted in dampening interest in expanding gambling. Every legislative session since

(Continued on page 4)