

Searching for the Common Good

The Right to Own Property is Important, But Not Absolute

By Jason Hall



Our political discourse often consists of a back-and-forth discussion between two seemingly irreconcilable extremes.

Many on the Left attack those on the Right as radical individualists who care nothing for the common good or for those who are less fortunate and in need of assistance. Many on the Right attack those on the Left as socialist technocrats who would trample the rights of the individual to achieve some elusive socially engineered utopia.

In truth, the most noble on both the Left and the Right are concerned with the common good which the Church defines as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 164). The conflict is partially the result of two differing perspectives on private property and its role in a just society.

Conservatives fear an outcome where individuals who work hard, innovate, save and invest wisely, and generally exercise responsibility in their personal affairs, lose the right to enjoy the fruits of their labors. If that happens, one of the primary motivations for productive activity will be lost, and society will suffer due to lower production of everything from food and clothing to new technologies that empower individuals and communities.

Liberals fear a “free market” that is anything but free, dominated by powerful interests that use outsized influence to stack the deck in their favor. The rich are therefore able to maintain their favored status, hoarding vast amounts of wealth without investing it in enterprises that provide opportunities for those at the lower levels of society.

What does Catholic Social Teaching have to say about the balance of property rights and the common good? In principle, the Church sees no conflict between the two; in fact, a respect for the right to own property is an essential element in advancing the common good.

In *Rerum Novarum*, the first social encyclical, Pope Leo XIII condemned socialism (the communal ownership of the means of production through the instrument of the State) and affirmed that “every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own (*Rerum Novarum*, 6).”

Furthermore, Pope Leo affirms, at least in part, the modern American conservative’s conviction that financial gain provides an appropriate incentive toward productivity in service to the common good (*Rerum Novarum*, 8), and states that “the practice of all ages has consecrated the principle of private ownership, as being pre-eminently in conformity with human nature, and as conducing in the most unmistakable manner to the peace and tranquility of human existence” (*Rerum Novarum*, 11). This respect for individual property is grounded in the divine law, particularly the Seventh and Tenth Commandments, which prohibit theft and disordered desire for the goods of others.

However, the discussion must not end there. Even prior to a respect for private property, we find the principle of the *universal destination of goods*, which is perhaps one of the least understood, and yet extremely important, principles in the Social Doctrine of the Church. Revelation tells us that God has entrusted the entirety of His physical creation to the stewardship of humanity, for the benefit of all men and women (Genesis 1:28-29). The gift of the earth to humanity as a whole, and not to a select few, “remains primordial, even if the promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2403). This principle makes it clear that the right to private property has its limits, and that those limits are defined by the

Continued on page 6

Catholic Conference Board of Directors



Joseph E. Kurtz
Archbishop of Louisville



William F. Medley
Bishop of Owensboro



Roger J. Foy
Bishop of Covington



Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Lexington

Staff

Executive Director
Rev. Patrick Delahanty

Jason D. Hall
Policy Analyst

Karen Chambers
Administrative Assistant

Related Ministries

Kentucky League for
Educational Alternatives

Harry Borders
Executive Director

Karen Chambers
Administrative Assistant

Bringing the Catholic Voice to the Public Square

By Rev. Patrick Delahanty



Summer is almost gone. The Thanksgiving holiday and the Christmas holiday draw near. Elections will soon be over. And our legislators will be heading back to Frankfort, this time for the “long” session, 60 days of opportunity to create public policies that benefit the common good and reflect the teaching of Jesus, or 60 days to cater to special interests and ignore the “cry of the poor” as did the ancient Kings of Israel. Or 60 days to do a little of both.

How much good and how much harm comes out of any legislative session depends, to some extent, on our own actions. Do we engage in the process, as our church leaders encourage us to do, or do we “sit this one out” and hope someone else does the work.?

Catholics @ the Capitol

To help the Catholic community be “Faithful Citizens” the Conference is sponsoring Catholics @ the Capitol (C@C) in Frankfort on February 6 and 7, 2012. The event takes place at the Capital Plaza Hotel, 405 Wilkerson Boulevard in downtown Frankfort.

There is a special room rate of \$86 plus tax for a single or double occupancy room. Rooms have a King or two double beds. Call 502.227.5100 to reserve a room at this rate by mentioning the C@C event.

The registration fee for the two-day event remains \$40. This minimum fee covers materials, plus dinner on Monday evening and a continental breakfast on Tuesday morning.

Following breakfast, participants will head to the State Capitol and meet with State Senators and State Representatives about three or four of our highest priority legislative issues.

Bishop Ronald Gainer of Lexington will celebrate a Mass on Monday evening and priests participating in the event are invited to concelebrate.

With more than 300 parishes and missions in Kentucky, it would be a wonderful demonstration of faithful citizenship were each of them to send at least one member to this event. Early planning to solicit those who may attend and even finding ways to help defray their costs could lead to our most successful C@C Frankfort event. Last year more

than 800 participants took part in C@C at diocesan events statewide. This provides a great pool of interested persons from which to draw.

Faithful Citizens Advocacy List

The Faithful Citizens Advocacy list is another important tool available to the Catholic community for use in persuading lawmakers and other government leaders to implement policies that uphold the right to life, respect human dignity, and promote the common good. To be even more effective, this list needs to grow significantly.

There are more than 400,000 Catholics in Kentucky, nearly one-tenth of the total population. And, guess what, not all of them have signed up to become Faithful Citizens.

And so, we encourage you—pastors, educators, lay leaders and others—to find at least five new persons who agree to add their names to the Faithful Citizen list and take action on important public policy matters.

Anytime is a good time to add names, but it strikes us that October and January of each year are times when the Catholic community is especially conscious of matters regarding human life and dignity.

Parish bulletin announcements or pulpit announcements about the list are helpful. Including sign-up opportunities online during regular parish events also yield positive results. CCK staff is certainly available to help you develop your own ideas about increasing participation in this important ministry.

A Website for the 21st Century

The Catholic Conference has updated its website, <http://www.ccky.org>. What was a wonderful 20th century site is an excellent 21st century site. It provides for more interaction between the Conference and those who visit the site, while still hosting our special publications and other documents important to the work of the Conference.

CCK also urges visitors to use the site to sign up to become Faithful Citizens and to check back frequently for new materials.

The new site allows staff to keep visitors updated about topics of special interest to Kentucky Catholics by blogging regularly on issues of public policy importance.

We have also joined many other Catholic conferences in providing a Facebook page. Use this link to visit the page and become a Catholic Conference Friend: <http://tinyurl.com/3ewwxms>. Thanks. We hope to see you there.

Shared Sacrifice Supports Catholic Schools

By Jim Mattingly

The last several decades have seen a dramatic increase in education offerings for K-12 students both in Kentucky and nationwide. *A Nation At Risk* was published in 1983, and it seemed to serve as a catalyst not only for diversification of options but also for thorough investigation of those options by concerned parents desiring a quality education for their children.



Jim Mattingly

As a public elementary school principal from 1988 through 2004, I witnessed a pronounced trend of parents of prospective students being more and more careful about their choice of schools. And especially after the passage of KERA (Kentucky Education Reform Act), I spoke with parents of prospective students who were looking not only into public schools but also Catholic schools, other private schools, and home schooling. The trend has accelerated since then. Nationally, the list of options would now include virtual learning schools, magnet schools, and charter schools. And this is how it should be. Increased competition is healthy, and schools must either get on a high performance track or be run over by the train.

While other options (except charter schools) exist in Kentucky, most students attend public schools, Catholic schools, or other non-public schools. As the political action arm of Kentucky's four Catholic bishops, CCK takes positions on a number of social and political issues. CCK's official position regarding K-12 education is that the Church advocates that **all schools receive the support necessary to be effective, especially because strong schools of all types are critically important to the Church's mission of serving the poor and disadvantaged.**

The passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 has further accelerated the movement to provide diverse options for schooling in the U. S. While the legislation's stated intent was to provide a quality education to every student in public schools, regardless of ethnicity, race, domestic situation, or disability, there is a substantial amount of skepticism regarding that stated intent. Many believe NCLB was designed so that most or all public schools would eventually be classified as "failing," in order to open the door for more federal and state government support of education alternatives. Regardless of the law's intent, it is a major public policy mistake to weaken public schools in any way. They must receive strong support if they are to succeed in their mission of learning for all.

At the same time, it cannot be overstated how important our Catholic schools are to the future of the Church as well as to the vitality and well-being of our state and our nation. Generation after generation, Catholic schools turn out excellent

graduates who provide invaluable leadership to their parishes, communities, and society as a whole. Because of their strong background in faith formation, Catholic school graduates tend to be leaders with high ethical and moral standards, the type of leaders our country truly needs.

Catholic schools in Kentucky exist due to the shared sacrifice of thousands of people, including pastors, parishioners, families, administrators, faculty and staff, students, relatives of students, the business community, and other generous donors. The list goes on and on. Parents of Catholic school students essentially pay for education twice. Like all citizens, they pay their taxes that support public schools, which guarantee children a free and appropriate public education as required by law. But in addition to paying those taxes, parents and other Catholics practice another level of stewardship by giving of their time, talent, and treasure to support their Catholic schools.

This support of Catholic schools by parishioners and by parents who use them for their children's education actually saves state government the expense of educating their own children. This saves Kentucky taxpayers millions of dollars that the state would otherwise have to spend to give Kentucky's children the education they deserve. Catholic schools represent a tremendous contribution to the state of Kentucky, providing their students with an excellent education armed with the information and skills they need to face the challenges ahead. Catholic schools help prepare them for the workplace and for a life in community that strengthens families and builds up the common good.

Catholic Education in Kentucky

• Students in Primary Schools	29,805
• Students in Secondary Schools	11,047
• 2011 High School Graduates	2,100
• Graduation Rate	99%
• Graduates Going to College	96%
• Graduates Going to Workplace	3%
• College Scholarships' Value	\$109M
• ACT Scores Average	24.7
• SAT Scores Average	1185
• Cost Per Elementary Student	\$5,000+
• Cost Per High School Student	\$7,000+

The Kentucky Department of Education 2010 Audited Expenditures by Pupil spreadsheet reports a cost of \$9,873 per student. If the 40,852 students now in Catholic schools were in the public school system, the General Assembly would need to find an additional \$403 million to fund their education. Not only do Catholic schools save taxpayers millions of dollars, as employers these schools pump millions into local economies.

Jim Mattingly is Superintendent for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Owensboro.

Merchants of Human Lives in the 21st Century

By Rev. Richard Meredith

In the Book of Revelation (The Apocalypse), John's vision of the fall of the City of Babylon includes a lament raised by the world's merchants who grieved their loss of revenue from sales to her (see Revelation 18).

There is a fascinating list of the wares they were accustomed to selling in the evil city. Most of the items are in themselves morally appropriate for sale anywhere. Weapons, narcotics, poisons, and such things do not appear on the list at all. Capping the list, however, is the inclusion of slaves, that is, human lives.

It exposes the economy of the evil city as one that exalted wealth, in defiance of God, over justice. Such cruelty poisoned the motives of all who had alliance with the wicked city, whether earthly rulers, merchants, transporters of goods, artists, industrialists, and ordinary citizens. The evil of the city was exposed by its treatment of human lives as commodities, not to mention its persecution of those who remained faithful to God.

This apocalyptic warning against collusion with the intrinsic evil of human slavery has been known to every generation of Christians since the end of the first century AD. But it appears not to have had much of an historical impact on most Christian generations. Slavery and trafficking in human lives was endemic in the ancient world inherited and often tolerated by Christian societies and governments.

Slowly, the Christian West turned against human slavery. In the Middle Ages, Franciscans and other Mendicant religious would offer themselves in the place of Christians held as slaves in Muslim lands. The popes were among the first to take stands against the enslavement of Black Africans in the 17th and 18th centuries. Christian motives, though late in history, prompted this nation to end slavery. We still experience the aftermath of slavery's inherent violence and that of the Civil War by which it was abolished.

It surprises many today to learn that human slavery and human trafficking still exist, touching even this country. Men, women, and children today are being smuggled and sold for labor and sex trade from the Third World to nations in the Developed World. It is so pervasive that the Kentucky General Assembly legislated to expose and prevent it in our borders.

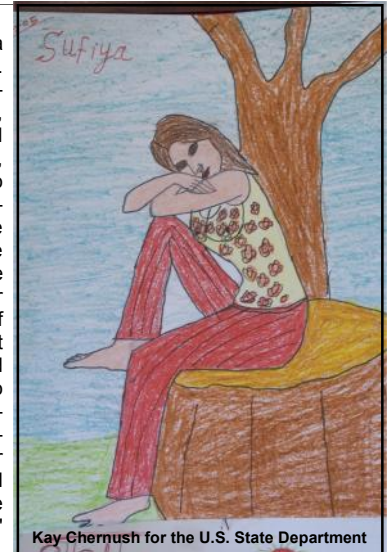
Lives in the womb disposable

That human lives are commonly treated as commodities, however, is far more extensive than just the horrors of modern slavery. For almost forty years human lives in the womb have been disposable in our country in the name of the privacy and personal sovereignty of women. Fetal tissues have been propagated and byproducts sold in research and medicine, the rest



Rev. Richard Meredith

The drawing is a self-portrait by a 15-year old trafficking victim. One of nine siblings in an impoverished and abusive family, "Kala" ran away from home and was sold into a brothel in India, where she was subjected to unspeakable brutality. On hearing that she was going to be trafficked to the Persian Gulf, she managed to escape. With the help of a passerby, she told her story to the police. In spite of threats, she filed a complaint against the brothel keeper and her protectors in court, leading to their conviction and incarceration. "Kala" now lives at a Catholic shelter for rescued girls. Her dream is to become a social worker to help, "Those who are trapped in evil."



Kay Chernush for the U.S. State Department

The KY Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking Program began in February 2008. The purpose of KY Rescue and Restore is two-fold: 1) To increase public awareness and identification of trafficking cases through educational workshops and training, and 2) To provide direct services to identified victims of human trafficking, helping them to achieve self-sufficiency and rebuild their lives.

The KY Rescue and Restore currently consists of five contract coalition members: Catholic Charities of Louisville, the Bluegrass Rape Crisis Center (Lexington), the Women's Crisis Center (Covington), Western KY Refugee Mutual Assistance Agency "The International Center" (Bowling Green), and the Adanta Regional Victim's Services Program (Somerset).

Since June 2008, 35 cases of human trafficking have been identified in various areas of Kentucky served by KY Rescue and Restore. The U. S. Department of State estimates that 14,000-17,000 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year, so there are likely many more victims in KY still living in conditions of slavery.

Of these 35 cases, 31% are sex trafficking, 60% are labor trafficking, and 9% have elements of both commercial sex and labor trafficking. Victims include men and women (34% men, 66% women), adults and children (11% children, 89% adults), U.S. citizens and foreign nationals (26% U.S. citizens, 74% foreign nationals).

Cases have been identified and referred by: rape crisis centers / domestic violence shelters, attorneys, health care providers (emergency rooms, psychiatric facilities, and health departments, law enforcement, victim service agencies, and neighbors/community members.

Information about the types of trafficking in Kentucky is available at <http://www.rescueandrestoreky.org/>.

Call 1.888.373.7888 to shut the traffickers down for good.

Fr. Richard Meredith, a diocesan priest in the Diocese of Owensboro is the pastor of Sts. Peter and Paul parish in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. He is also a member of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky Pro-life Committee.

simply thrown away. Abortion is big business.

The human embryo fares even more poorly. Countless human lives no bigger than a few cells each (as we all once were) are produced, some brought to term and birth, huge numbers placed in frozen storage, many subjected to cellular dismemberment and research, many simply discarded. While not a single therapy has been produced by use of human embryonic stem cells, they are commodities of great interest for medical commerce.

There is also reasonable fear of trading in human organs "harvested" not only from willing donors who have died, but from unsuitable corpses, unwitting donors, and from those whose death is precipitated for the sake of the harvest. Trafficking in human flesh is alive and well, to the horror of those who know God.

Human lives as commodities

It is surprisingly easy to fall into the view and use of human lives as commodities. Head counts in schools equal dollars of public monies allotted to public school systems. There is a price on each head, even as each teacher is challenged to see in each child a being of immeasurable worth.

The national census will be used to assign states seats in the US House of Representatives. Heads or bodies have political value for the distribution of funding and power.

County jails budget on the basis of the per capita value of each inmate and the inmate's status (county, state, federal). There is an understandable interchange of inmates around the state (sometimes interstate) for the sake of institutional income. Federal inmates have a real premium status. The costs of the penal system and society's demand for punishment of offenders pressure law enforcement into a fiscal calculus which tends to make commodities of incarcerated people. While local staffs work hard to respect personal human dignity, the system is highly pressured by numbers.

Numbers of beds in hospitals and nursing homes, similar to hotel/motel rooms available to a community's tourism, are real commercial factors. Legitimate accommodation for numbers of beds (bodies, physical persons) does demand fiscal, political, economic, and material quantification. But, since the value of the human being cannot be quantified, the social covenant cannot be reduced to economics without horrific results.

Given human fallenness, sometimes a very short distance separates morally legitimate business from a disregard for human dignity and the trafficking in human lives. The danger is all the more threatening in our world with the overt slavery of human trafficking and the commonplace, wholesale disposal of embryonic and fetal human lives as it exists in our society today. This inhumanity of humanity to humanity bears within itself the self-destructive seeds of social collapse. As the Revelation of John foresaw and foretells, on its own evil Babylon the Great will fall.

Educating About the Death Penalty

On March 9, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed into law a repeal of the death penalty, replacing it with a sentence of life without parole. The ban on capital punishment comes after an eleven-year moratorium on executions and makes Illinois the 16th state to end the death penalty. It also marks the lowest number of states with the death penalty in more than thirty years.

It seems timely to recall the 1999 Good Friday statement of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Administrative Board:

In the spirit of the coming biblical jubilee, we join our Holy Father and once again call for the abolition of the death penalty. We urge all people of good will, particularly Catholics, to work to end the use of capital punishment. At appropriate opportunities, we ask pastors to preach and teachers to teach about respect for all life and about the need to end the death penalty.

In the coming months, pastors, teachers and "all people of good will" will have access to some excellent presentations that can help in the work to abolish the death penalty. In addition, some new resources are available for use in pulpits, classroom, and other less formal settings.

WITNESS TO INNOCENCE: The Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (KCADP) hopes to find hosts for five visitors from Witness to Innocence, a program of presentations by former death row inmates. Details for an event at the UK Newman Center are being finalized, and several other colleges are considering hosting these speakers. CCK will post the dates and times of these events as they become available.

PASTORAL LEADERS' ADVOCACY TRAINING: KCADP, in conjunction with the Kentucky Council of Churches and the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, plans to equip 100 (or more) pastors and pastoral leaders with the tools necessary to become effective proponents of abolition of the death penalty in Kentucky in each of the 100 House districts of Kentucky's State Representatives.

The Catholic Conference encourages priests, deacons, and other pastoral leaders to participate in one of the following training sessions:

- November 16 at the Home of the Innocents in Louisville, 1100 East Market Street; or
- November 17 at the Berea Friends Meeting House in Berea, 300 Harrison Road.

Both sessions begin at 9:30 a.m. and end at 2:30 p.m. Lunch is included at no cost to participants.

You can sign up online at <http://tinyurl.com/3mppw2c> or contact our office at 502.875.4345 and speak to Karen.

VICTIMS' FAMILY MEMBERS SPEAK OUT: The Record, the weekly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Louisville, published three excellent articles about four Catholic women, all members of St. Martin De Porres in Louisville, who had family members murdered. Each woman opposes the use of the death penalty. These have a multitude of uses in parish religious education programs. Advent and Lenten discussion groups might use them for reflection on forgiveness and its healing effect in our lives. All are available on our website, along with many other resources regarding human life and dignity.

The Right to Own Property is Important, But Not Absolute

Continued from page 1

common good. Here the Church, up to a point, affirms the modern American liberal's concern that it is possible, without appropriate oversight, for a capitalist economic system to become disordered to the point that it

When the Common Good is Ignored

"And the great owners, who must lose their land in an upheaval, the great owners with access to history, with eyes to read history and to know the great fact: when property accumulates in too few hands it is taken away. And that companion fact: when a majority of the people are hungry and cold they will take by force what they need. And the little screaming fact that sounds through all history: repression works only to strengthen and knit the repressed."

- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Chapter 19

no longer provides opportunity for the advancement of disadvantaged individuals and groups within a society.

So, what does this mean for us, here and now? It means that both the Left and the Right have legitimate concerns, but often do not express the complete picture. There is indeed a danger that an ever-expanding state can create undue burdens upon individuals and private enterprise, jeopardizing the ability of each person to achieve their full potential and further the common good.

The Church recognizes in the principle of *subsidiarity* that governments are required "to refrain from anything that would de facto restrict the existential space of the smaller essential cells of society. Their initiative, freedom and responsibility must not be supplanted" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 186).

The smallest and most essential cell of society is the family. The bishops have been unwavering in their support of the family and in the right of families to make decisions appropriate to them, particularly in the rearing of children. For this reason, in cooperation with the Kentucky League for Educational Alternatives, another ministry of the bishops of Kentucky, the Catholic Conference supports state policies that empower parents with greater freedom in choosing the type of education received by their children, while also maintaining a strong system of public schools.

Also, financial profit is not to be seen as an end in and of itself, but as a means to achieve the common good. If profits are being acquired through unjust means that undermine the common good, the state may need to regulate a private industry. For this reason, CCK supports initiatives such as a cap on payday loans, which have been shown to trap the financially vulnerable in a cycle of debt. The defense by the industry that they are simply engaging in "free enterprise" does not absolve them of moral responsibility for the harm they cause in the pursuit of financial gain.

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching are not expressed completely in the platforms of either major American political party. As Catholics, we are called to work within the political system, including within any party to which we may belong, to advance policies that further respect for the dignity of the human person and the greater realization of the common good. May we always be followers of Jesus Christ first, and only then Republicans or Democrats.

From the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church

164. The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people. According to its primary and broadly accepted sense, the common good indicates "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily."

The common good does not consist in the simple sum of the particular goods of each subject of a social entity. Belonging to everyone and to each person, it is and remains "common", because it is indivisible and because only together is it possible to attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard also to the future. Just as the moral actions of an individual are accomplished in doing what is good, so too the actions of a society attain their full stature when they bring about the common good. The common good, in fact, can be understood as the social and community dimension of the moral good.

CCK Seeks Incremental Change in Public Policy

by Jason Hall

The French philosopher and polemicist, Voltaire, begins his poem *La Béguéaule*, “In his writings, a wise Italian says that the best is the enemy of the good.” It has become a modern axiom that the perfect is often the enemy of the good. This can be especially true in the political arena, where public policy is often the result of compromise. Seldom does one see a preferred policy enacted swiftly and completely. Often, the temptation to give up hope and despair of enacting meaningful change can become overwhelming.



As Catholics, we must resist this temptation, and understand the difference between accepting the necessity of incremental change and outright surrender to the larger culture. In his book on Catholics and political life, *Render Unto Caesar*, Archbishop Charles Chaput writes,

As Catholics and citizens, we need to cultivate the ability to distinguish between legitimate compromise and cowardice; between prudence and weakness in ourselves and our elected officials. Compromise often helps the political process to achieve progress. In the United States, the law currently allows abortion on demand. We live under that unjust law, but we sin only if we give up the struggle to change it. Room exists for gradualism along the way.¹

As Archbishop Chaput notes, this principle is true even in the gravest of matters, including those which threaten the right to life itself. While we can never rest until the dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death, is respected, we can realize the limited political possibilities of the present moment and work for incremental change toward a greater respect for human life.

It is in this spirit that the bishops of Kentucky have supported incremental pro-life measures such as parental consent, mandatory waiting periods, and fetal homicide legislation.

Currently, the Catholic Conference is working to enact strong informed consent legislation that would ensure that each and every woman who is considering an abortion has the information she needs to make a truly informed decision, as well as a reasonable time period to digest that information before the abortion is performed. Right now in Kentucky, abortion is the only medical procedure for which the law does not require a medical professional to fully inform the patient of the details of the procedure or the potential risks.

It may be tempting to insist on even greater protections for the unborn, and certainly the bishops would like to see those protections eventually enacted. But, over the past several years, experience has shown that an informed consent bill has overwhelming support in both houses of the Kentucky General Assembly, while other pro-life initiatives do not.

Attempts to pass more comprehensive bills have resulted in a failure to enact any pro-life legislation at all. Until the membership of the legislature becomes more pro-life, we must do what we can to further the recognition of the sanctity of human life.

Likewise, the Catholic Conference has worked for years toward the abolition of the death penalty, but the bishops have seen fit to support incremental changes to the law until the political will exists to completely reject the use of capital punishment. In 1998, the General Assembly adopted the Kentucky Racial Justice Act, to help ensure that the race of either the accused or the victim is never a determining factor in whether or not the Commonwealth seeks the death penalty. Kentucky also excluded mentally retarded defendants from the death penalty, well before the U.S. Supreme Court found that such executions were unconstitutional. Currently, the Catholic Conference is supporting an effort to exclude defendants with severe mental illness from consideration for capital punishment, in the same way the mentally retarded have been excluded.

In whatever area of public policy we may be working, patience and perseverance are necessary virtues. It often takes years, or indeed decades, to achieve a dramatic change in public policy. Our Lord has called us to be the salt of the earth, even when that which we hope to preserve may seem irretrievably lost. Our hope rests in Him, not in the civil laws under which we must live. When an unjust law seems impossible to overcome, we must remember Archbishop Chaput's admonition that “we sin only if we give up the struggle to change it.”

¹Charles J. Chaput, *Render Unto Caesar* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), 153-4.

A Woman Has a Right to Know

Below is the text for legislation the Catholic Conference of Kentucky supports so that a woman considering abortion is first fully informed about the procedure in a face to face meeting with medical professionals. Now she receives information by a recorded telephone message with no opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns.

AN ACT relating to full disclosure in public safety.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔ SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 311 IS CREATED TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

If a section of the Kentucky Revised Statutes uses the phrase "individual, private setting" to describe the conditions under which informed consent must be given to a medical procedure, then the informed consent offered in accordance with that section shall be considered valid only if a physician or a licensed nurse, physician assistant, or social worker to whom the responsibility has been delegated by the physician has a face-to-face meeting with the patient and both parties are physically located in the same room.



**CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE
OF KENTUCKY**

Archdiocese of Louisville
PO BOX 1073
Louisville Kentucky 40201

502-875-4345
Fax: 502-875-2841
cckstaff@ccky.org
www.ccky.org

Kentucky League for
Educational Alternatives
502-875-8010

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Louisville, KY
Permit No. 1279

Strengthening the Immigration Legal Network in Kentucky

By Anne Achico

Catholic Charities of Louisville has offered immigration legal services at its 4th St. location in Louisville since 1992, staffed by experienced and compassionate attorneys. As years passed, services expanded to more diverse client populations and more complex cases. The service area has also grown, extending beyond the Louisville-Metro area.

Immigrants living outside the city centers of Louisville, Lexington, Owensboro, and Covington are frequently isolated from professional legal assistance due to lack of transportation or the available legal assistance is not affordable.

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, who have a long history of serving Kentuckians throughout the Commonwealth, has given Catholic Charities of Louisville a generous grant to provide legal assistance and advice to immigrants and others living in communities outside the Metro Louisville area. With this grant Catholic Charities legal immigration staff will be able to conduct monthly legal clinics at multiple sites throughout the state.

Catholic Charities legal staff will work with the local church and professional community to find attorneys and service providers who will share their knowledge and experience by participating in these legal clinics or by attending accredited continuing education classes of relevant topics for attorneys, social workers, and other professionals.

The first clinic takes place on Sunday, September 18th at St. John the Evangelist Church in Carrollton, Kentucky from 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM.

Information about additional dates and sites for legal clinics will be posted on the Catholic Charities of Louisville website: <http://cclou.com/>.

For more information, contact Anne Achico at aaichico@archlou.org or 502-637-9097.

