

You Cannot Live on \$5.15 an Hour

A Moral Opportunity: Raise the Minimum Wage

We know that you can't live on \$5.15 an hour. A person earning \$5.15 per hour makes \$206 for a 40 hour work week and \$10,712 per year before taxes. That is \$5,400 below the poverty line for a family of 3. Working families, especially single mothers, cannot make ends meet on that amount of money. They can't provide for the necessities of life: housing, food, transportation, clothing, utilities, medicine, medical care, taxes. When their family income falls short, parents are faced with unworkable, hopeless choices of struggling to provide for the basic needs of a dignified life.

It is a cruel myth to say that the only people earning a minimum wage are teenagers working for discretionary money. The facts tell a different story. Nationally 80% of minimum wage workers are adults (over the age of 20). In Kentucky, 43% of those who would be affected by an increase are single moms (19%), single-earner couples (12.3%), or mixed-earner families (11.6%).

The number of people who would be helped by a raise in Kentucky is significant. Under the state minimum wage proposal filed by State Representative J.R. Gray, 79,000 children live in families with a parent slated for a raise. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the earnings in a family with children come from a worker whose wage would increase under this proposal. If the bill passes, 189,000 workers would benefit from a raise to \$6.50, 89,000 directly because their wages fall below \$6.50 and another 105,000 who would see a raise because of the spillover effect.

There is overwhelming public support for a minimum wage increase. In a November 2005 Gallup Poll, 83% of Americans favored increasing the minimum wage, while only 14% opposed it. *The Gallup Poll Briefing* (March 2006 pp. 8-9).

Contrary to what many believe, the broad public support for increasing the minimum wage is bipartisan. Republicans (74%), Independents (80%), and Democrats (93%) overwhelmingly favor an increase in the minimum wage. 79% of those making more than \$75,000 favor an increase. *The Gallup Poll Briefing* (March 2006 p. 8).

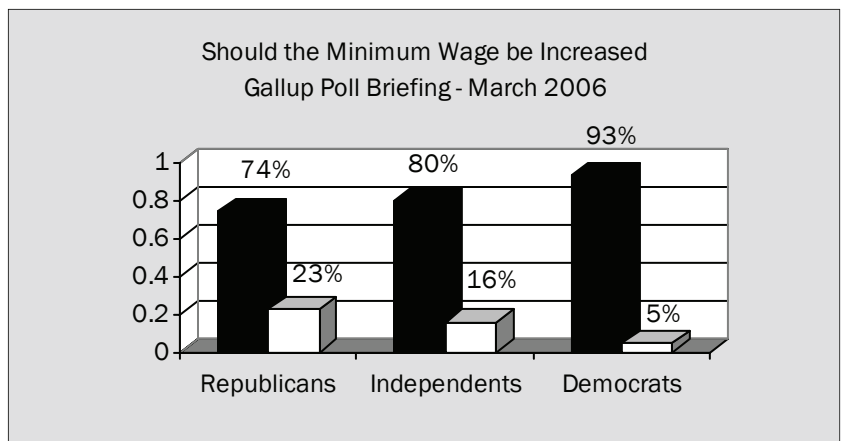
Contrary to popular opinion, the majority of small business owners support raising the minimum wage. "Surprisingly, a new Wells Fargo-Gallup Small Business Index poll, conducted March 1, 2006, finds significant support among small business owners for increasing the minimum wage.... Forty-six percent of small business owners say they believe the minimum wage should

be increased while 34% believe it should remain where it is now.... Not long ago, one could reasonably assume that the 'minimum wage' was an issue of major importance to America's small business owners. The Wells Fargo-Gallup poll suggests this is no longer the case." *The Gallup Poll Briefing* (May 2006 pp. 29-30).

Contrary to what many would expect, economists support a minimum wage increase. In the fall of 2005, 562 economists signed a letter agreeing that "the minimum wage has been an important part of our nation's economy for 65 years." They said that "as with a federal increase, modest increases in state minimum wages in the range of \$1.00 to \$2.00 can significantly improve the lives of low-income workers and their families, without the adverse effects that critics have claimed." Three of the four Nobel Laureates who signed have served as presidents of the American Economic Association, the mainstream, economists' professional association.

Now is the time to raise the minimum wage. There comes a time when commonsense fairness compels a public policy change. Kentucky has recently witnessed that dynamic on a number of issues like sound school nutrition practices, making seat belt use mandatory, wearing helmets on ATVs, requiring graduated drivers licenses. That moment has come for raising Kentucky's inadequate minimum wage.

What is occurring in other states is an indication of the need for a raise. Since 1997, the District of Columbia and 22



states have raised the minimum wage. You know the time has come when the head of the world's largest retailer—the very symbol of low prices—calls for a raise. Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott believes "it is time for Congress to take a look at the

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“We Are All Really Responsible For All.”

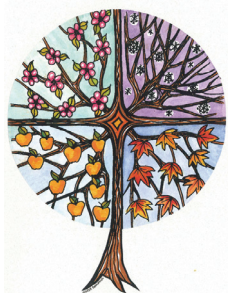
“Prayer that Storms the Heavens...”

By Ed Monahan
Executive Director



Ed
Monahan
Executive
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In anticipation of the celebration of Respect Life Sunday on the first Sunday in October, the four Kentucky Bishops have released a CCK *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transition*, asking Catholics to pray for a culture of life. The Book consists of 10 life prayer services:



- Celebrating the Sanctity of Life
- Uniting Our Suffering with the Cross of Christ
- Prayer with One Who Is Dying
- Entrustment Ceremony for an Adopted Child
- Memorial for the Loss of a Child
- Healing and Reconciliation after Abortion
- Blessing of Pilgrims on the March for Life
- Memorial for the Deceased Homeless
- On the Anniversary of a Death
- Vigil at the Time of an Execution

In 2001, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life* called for a vigorous reaffirmation of the value of human life and its inviolability through education, pastoral care, public policy initiatives, and prayer. This CCK *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transition* fosters prayer as “the foundation of all that we do in defense of human life....Only with prayer—prayer that storms the heavens for justice and mercy, prayer that cleanses our hearts and our souls—will the culture of death that surrounds us today be replaced with a culture of life.”

This 2006 Respect Life Sunday marks the 34th anniversary of the successful educational program started by the US Catholic bishops in October 1972. In each year the bishops have focused on critical life issues—abortion, euthanasia, marriage and family life, the use of the death penalty, poverty, immigration, chastity, natural family planning, post-abortion healing and reconciliation, the culture of life, biotechnology, children, teens, persons with disabilities, the elderly, those who are dying, and more.

The prayers recognize that “A wide spectrum of issues touches on the protection of human life and the promotion of human dignity.” As Pope John Paul II said: “Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good.” (*The Gospel of Life*, no. 87).

As the *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* states, “Among important issues involving the dignity of human life with which the Church is concerned, abortion necessarily plays a central role.... This focus and the Church's commitment to a consistent ethic of life complement one another. A consistent ethic of life, which explains the Church's teaching at the level of moral principle—far from diminishing concern for abortion and euthanasia or equating all issues touching on the dignity of human life—recognizes instead the distinctive character of each issue while giving each its proper place within a coherent moral vision. As bishops of the United States we have issued pastoral letters on war and peace, economic justice, and other social questions affecting the dignity of human life—and we have implemented programs for advancing the Church's witness in these areas through parishes, schools, and other Church institutions (e.g., *Communities of Salt and Light* [1994]; *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching* [1998]). Taken together, these diverse pastoral statements and practical programs constitute no mere assortment of unrelated initiatives but rather a consistent strategy in support of all human life in its various stages and circumstances.”

In their letter to parishes announcing the CCK *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transition* the Kentucky Bishops said, “In accord with the *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* we continue to recommend that our dioceses, parishes, apostolic groups, and formation programs take initiatives ‘to sponsor programs of prayer and fasting as well as paraliturgical programs’ to promote the Gospel of life. In addition to renewed participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church, we encourage Catholics to adopt programs of private prayer. To that end, we are publishing *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transitions*, a collection of prayer services adaptable to a variety of settings. As a response to important pastoral concerns and needs, it is our hope that these prayer services will truly enhance and enrich the practice of intercessory prayer among our people, an indispensable component for building a new culture of life.”

CCK's *Pro-Life Prayer Services for Times of Transition* is found at www.ckky.org/. Click on the Publications navigator bar in the left column.

“You Shall Not Steal!”

Raise the Minimum Wage

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minimum wage and other legislation that can help working families.” Scott observed that “The U.S. minimum wage of \$5.15 an hour has not been raised in nearly a decade and we believe it is out of date with the times.” Scott sees at Wal-Mart “how many of our customers are struggling to get by. Our customers simply don’t have the money to buy basic necessities between pay checks.” He noted that “While it is unusual for us to take a public position on a public policy issue of this kind, we simply believe it is time for Congress to take a responsible look at the minimum wage and other legislation that may help working families.”

Work is sacred. Many see work and wages as only economic matters, but we Catholics see work and wages in a compelling moral context. Work is more than a way to make a living: it is a form of participation in God’s creation. The value of work, according to our Catholic tradition, is grounded in the dignity of the human beings who do it. Just as every human life has value, so too does every worker have dignity. *Laborem Exercens* (1981).

Catholic Social justice doctrine honors work for a just wage as a critical means to achieve human dignity. In well-known encyclicals of popes starting with Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 *Rerum Novaum*, Catholic social justice doctrine has addressed the issue of the rights and duties of capital and labor. Achieving a morally fair wage is a central papal teaching, “the worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family.... But if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, social justice demands that changes be introduced as soon as possible whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman.” Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), n. 71. A just wage is a fundamental way we advance human dignity.

Shouldn’t the market place determine the wage? Some resist raising the minimum wage because they believe that the marketplace is supreme in a capitalistic economic system and that the government should not dictate the level of wages. The Church sees it otherwise. People on the margins deserve special help from the state. Pope Leo XIII taught, “The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves,

and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. And it is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong in the mass of the needy, should be specially cared for and protected by the government.” *Rerum Novaum*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Chapter Two “You shall Love your Neighbor as Yourself”

ARTICLE 7: THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT, “You shall not steal.” 2434 A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice.²²¹ In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. “Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good.”²²² Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages.

nn. 37, 45. Pope John XXIII reaffirmed in *Mater Et Magistra* (1961) that the “remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner.” (n. 71).

How vital is raising the minimum wage? Some people do not see raising the minimum wage as an issue of import. But when a society and the economic system of a country is evaluated under our social justice doctrine, its place among issues is better understood. While it is not the only criteria, Pope John Paul II identified a just wage as a “key,” and “concrete means of *verifying the justice* of the whole socio-economic system and, in any case, of checking that it is functioning justly.” *Laborem exercens* (1981), n. 19.

Now is the time. A 2005 Census Bureau report found that by the end of 2004 Kentucky had become the 6th poorest state, dropping from 10th place. Raising the minimum wage, while not lifting families out of poverty, will increase earnings for many working poor families, and provide more security for families and children, especially single working mothers. Let’s do it now. It is our moral responsibility and opportunity.

Kentucky Bishops Warn Parishes of Limits on Political Activity

For many years, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky has had a policy in place regarding the limits on political activity for both theological and legal reasons. The Internal Revenue Service has recently unveiled its 2006 Political Activity Compliance Initiative and also issued a reminder to 501(c)(3) organizations, including churches, regarding the prohibition against political campaign intervention during the upcoming election season. Kentucky's four Catholic Bishops reiterate CCK's longstanding policy and remind pastors and others of the requirement to adhere strictly to it. To do otherwise jeopardizes the Church's ability to serve others by losing our tax exempt status.

The most recent IRS reminder quotes IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson: "The rule against political campaign intervention by charities and churches is long established. We are stepping up our efforts to enforce it."

In addition, at a CLE conference at Georgetown University on

April 27, 2006, Lois Lerner, IRS Director, Exempt Organizations, indicated that IRS has been following up on certain exempt organizations that received IRS advisories regarding political campaign intervention with respect to the 2004 elections and discovered that some of these organizations continued to engage in the same activities that gave rise to the IRS advisory. This is not a situation in which an organization wishes to find itself.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Office of General Counsel has produced Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations (March 2004). This document sets out practical explanations and illustrations for various situations encountered. We think you will find this helpful. It is found at: <http://www.usccb.org/ogc/guidelines.shtml>.

If, after reading the policy statement below, readers have questions, please contact CCK and we will be happy to discuss the matter with you.

Catholic Conference of Kentucky Policy on Political Activities

Catholics are called by faithful citizenship "to become an informed, active and responsible participant in the political process." (*Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility* (2003)). Pope John Paul II has emphasized this responsibility. "Democracy needs wisdom, democracy needs virtue. Democracy serves what is true and right when it safeguards the dignity of every human person, when it respects inviolable and inalienable human rights, and when it makes the common good the end criterion regulating all public social life." (Pope John Paul II, October 8, 1995). Civic involvement in our democracy on the part of Catholics is integral to our responsible presence in the public square. It is not limited to just elections.

With our encouragement of faithful citizenship, prudence demands that we review the guidelines involving political activity which apply to Catholic organizations. Individuals acting in their individual capacity and not in any Church capacity are free to engage in partisan political activity. However, Churches and individuals representing churches in their official capacities are prohibited from partisan political activity. The Church cannot endorse or oppose candidates for election to public office, including nonpartisan candidates, such as judicial candidates. These guidelines are rooted in theological as well as legal reasons.

The Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* clarified the relationship between the Church and the political order. "The Church, by reason of her role and competence, is not identified in any way with the political community nor bound to any political system. She is at once a sign and safeguard of the transcendent character of the human

person." (*The Church in the Modern World* (1965), No. 76). Pope Benedict XVI's first encyclical spelled out important distinctions concerning the role of the Church and politics. The Church is "duty-bound to offer, through the purification of reason and through ethical formation, her own specific contribution towards understanding the requirements of justice and achieving them politically.... The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society, on the other hand, is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity." (*Deus Caritas Est* (2005) Nos. 28, 29). It is the responsibility of the Church to "stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice," and it is the responsibility of the laity to work for a just society.

In addition to these theological reasons, there are appropriate legal limitations on the Church's political activity. In order for Catholic organizations to maintain their tax exemption, they must comply with section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) which contains an absolute prohibition "against participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate...."

We restate our long-standing Catholic Conference of Kentucky policy that only voting guide materials published directly by United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (e.g., *Faithful Citizenship*) or by the Catholic Conference of Kentucky may be distributed in parishes. Other materials, even if they are published by a Catholic organization and seem non-partisan, shall not be distributed.

As Bishops of the Commonwealth, we established this current policy in 1995 because of concerns ex-

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Catholic Conference of Kentucky Policy on Political Activities

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pressed to us. Among other concerns, the issues covered in outside voter education materials typically do not illustrate the wide range of issues of importance to the Church, but rather reflect the issue advocacy of the preparing organization, often clearly partisan. In addition, their preparation, content, format and presentation may not satisfy the requirements of section 501(c)(3) applicable to Catholic organizations. Often, the organizations preparing these voter education materials are not section 501(c)(3) organizations, and thus are not subject to the political campaign activity prohibition. The fact that it may be permissible for the preparing organization to distribute a voter guide does not make it appropriate for Catholic organizations to do so.

The dissemination of any campaign materials, including, but not limited to, campaign signs, candidate or party literature, is not permitted. Nothing prevents a candidate from attending a church picnic that is open to

“The rule against political campaign intervention by charities and churches is long established. We are stepping up our efforts to enforce it.”

Mark W. Everson
IRS Commissioner

the public. However, the distribution of campaign material by that candidate is not permitted under Internal Revenue Code regulations that apply to political activity by tax exempt organizations.

The distribution of voters' guides, unless published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops or the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, is prohibited.

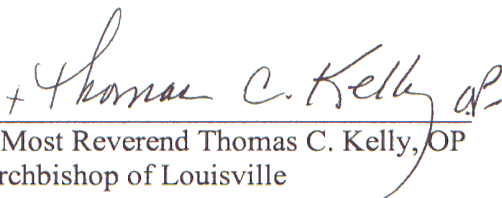
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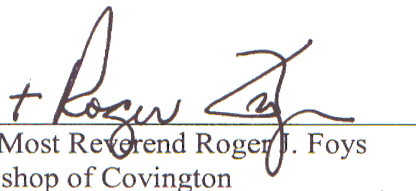
Our manner of conduct in the public square is of critical importance. The Church's role in the public order entails being principled but not ideological and clear but also civil. The Church must never be co-opted by partisan agendas. *Faithful Citizenship* reminds us that one of our “greatest blessings in the United States is our right and responsibility to participate in civic life.” We appreciate your encouraging Catholics to bring our faith's moral convictions to public

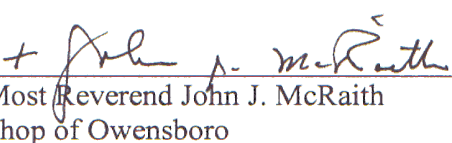
life. At the same time, we are grateful for your scrupulously adhering to our CCK policies and USCCB's *Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations*.

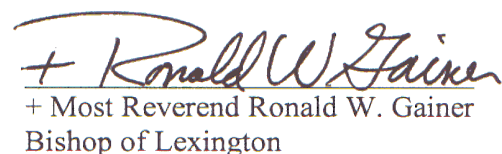
Please direct any questions regarding this matter to the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, 502-875-4345.

Devotedly yours in Christ,


+ Most Reverend Thomas C. Kelly, OP
Archbishop of Louisville


+ Most Reverend Roger J. Foy
Bishop of Covington


+ Most Reverend John J. McRaith
Bishop of Owensboro


+ Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer
Bishop of Lexington



This is the third in a series of articles by the CCK Hispanic Committee on the **Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform** which aims to reach beyond the networks of the participating national agencies, and to enlist the support of Catholic individuals and institutions in dioceses throughout the country.

Visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org for more information. Le invitamos a visitar nuestra página con regularidad, debido a que se estará actualizando constantemente con materiales, noticias relevantes y otra información que esperamos sea de su utilidad.

Migration in Light of the Word of God: Why is the Catholic Church involved in Immigration?

By Tom Gurucharri



Tom Gurucharri

Immigration! Illegal immigrants! Undocumented! Border Security...! Lately you can hardly turn on the television or radio or read a newspaper without these words being thrown at you. With the media, you at least have the choice of turning them off or putting the paper down. But when the issue comes to you from the pulpit during "your" Sunday Mass, you no longer have such a simple choice. You might escape, thinking that this is just the pastor's personal issue and let it go – but no,

this keeps coming back at you again and again.

So what is the real issue here? Why is the Catholic Church involved in immigration and why does it concern me? What you are hearing from the pulpit and from others in your Catholic community is not just personal opinions. It is solid advocacy from the Church on the dignity and value of all human life. The position of the Catholic Church is derived from Christ's own words and the Gospels; perhaps the most familiar to most of us is the Gospel of Matthew 25:35-40:

For I was...a stranger and you welcomed me.... 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.

Christ's message in these Gospel words is clear and powerful! We are not being asked to acknowledge and accept strangers because it is the socially correct thing to do – we are asked to do this because they are His people – and He loves them! As a refugee Himself, Jesus knows all too well the pain of being rejected and unwelcome.

In 2000, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated an important Pastoral statement: : *Welcoming the Stranger among us: Unity in Diversity*. Therein the Bishop's repeat the words of Matthew's Gospel to challenge us to a conversion. We are challenged to go beyond mere responsibility and become compassionate to the real plight of the immigrant, that we reach out in a genuine way to welcome those with whom we are not familiar or comfortable!

The Church's teaching of respect for human dignity also comes from the words of our Popes in their encyclicals and statements from our Bishops. In his 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, Pope John XXIII clearly states the position of the Church on the right to immigrate:

...every human being has the right to freedom of movement and of residence within the confines of his own

State. When there are just reasons in favor of it, he must be permitted to emigrate to other countries and take up residence there. The fact that he is a citizen of a particular State does not deprive him of membership in the human family, nor of citizenship in that universal society, the common, world-wide fellowship of men. (25)

So why now? Why is this such a concern today? The real answer is that it is not just today. But some of the labels are different and the difficulty of understanding a poverty and desperation, that "we did not create" make this a little more difficult to accept. It is reasonable and fair to recognize this. It is just as reasonable and fair for the Church to challenge us to learn, to welcome, to accept, to embrace what we may not fully understand.

The Catholic Church supports the rights of a sovereign nation to control its border. But the laws enacted to do so should not just be to protect our economic well-being. They should consider the responsibility and accountability of a nation for its principles and its sovereign obligations. The United States is known as one of the most charitable nations in the world. We are known for our diversity and our ability to accept an immense challenge when the need arises. As Catholics, we who profess that we believe in the One, Holy, and Apostolic Church should be at the front of the line reaching out to those who come to us so broken and needy that they felt they had to leave their own nations.

In 1965, when this country was just beginning to awaken to the injustices of racism, the Second Vatican Council was closing its final session. At that time the world's Catholic bishops their important *Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World*, a document on Catholic social thought clearly stating the role of the church in the world. They wrote that "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel; (the Church must be) at once a sign and a safeguard of the transcendent character of the human person." (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4, 76)

At the time that document was issued, Cardinal Mahoney of Los Angeles summarized the Bishops' statement this way: "Catholic teaching is clear: Our personal destiny is linked to the fate of those most vulnerable."

Today, over forty years later, as Cardinal Archbishop of Los Angeles, a region of the country severely impacted by immigration today, Cardinal Mahoney is still a leading advocate against harmful legislation. He continues promoting compassion and positive change in treatment of the immigrant.

The need for the Church to teach and encourage us to act on today's immigration issues is unfortunate. But the fact that the basis for these teachings is Christ's own loving message of the Gospels is a blessing. It is wonderfully appropriate that the Justice for Immigrants Campaign is called "a journey of hope."

Tom Gurucharri is the Coordinator of Hispanic Ministry for the Archdiocese of Louisville's Office of Multicultural Ministry.

Kentucky Bishops Issue Pastoral Statement on Immigration Policy

“Every Man and Woman is the Image of God”

The four Catholic Bishops of Kentucky weighed in on the immigration debate by issuing a pastoral statement, *Every Man and Woman is the Image of God*, addressed first of all to Kentucky's 400,000 Catholics, and then to all residents of the Commonwealth.

“*Every Man and Woman is the Image of God*,” said Ed Monahan, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, “is a summary of the Church's understanding of her responsibility to welcome Christ as we meet Him in the faces of the newcomers in our state.”

Sacred Scripture is the foundation for the Church's understanding that God expects us to treat the “alien” in a just manner:

When an alien resides with you in your land, do not molest him. You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God. (Lev 19:33-34).

The Gospel of Matthew records that famous moment in chapter 25, when, in the telling of a parable about the Last Judgment, Jesus takes on the identity of the “stranger” whom we have or have not welcomed.

Beginning with Pope Pius XII's *Exsul Familia* and continuing through the teaching of our present pontiff, Pope Benedict XVI, the Church has clearly spoken about the obligation her members have to welcome the “stranger” and treat them justly.

In 2006 Pope Benedict XVI called us to see that “every man and woman is the image of God.” Joining that call, The KY Bishops “invite Catholics and all Kentuckians to welcome the beneficial aspects of migration, to overcome every form of discrimination, injustice and contempt of the persons coming to our land, for every immigrant is the image of God. We especially invite Catholics to work for the just treatment in our laws of the children of God who are immigrants.”

They expressly thank all those Catholics in Kentucky who have accepted the challenge of welcoming newcomers:



Each year the U. S. Church celebrates National Migration Week. Poster depicts the infant, Jesus, and his parents, Mary and Joseph, fleeing to safety in Egypt.

The Church's dedication to caring for migrants of every kind was set out by Pope Pius XII in *Exsul Familia*, “[T] here never has been a period during which the Church has not been active in behalf of migrants.” In this apostolic constitution, Pope Pius XII identified “The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, [as] the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil.” (*Exsul Familia*, Apostolic Constitution of Pius XII, August 1, 1952).

Every Man and Woman is the Image of God
Catholic Conference of Kentucky 2006

We deeply appreciate the magnificent, selfless, prayerful work being done in our parishes and dioceses and by all others, paid and volunteer, in our Commonwealth who minister to our neighbors from other lands. It is the work of Jesus.

Of special concern to the bishops are unborn children of migrant parents:

Unborn children are of special concern to us. We especially urge parishes to help immigrant women who are pregnant “without discrimination as to their status or nationality” (EF, Pius XII) by addressing the needs they have for themselves, their unborn children and their families. Our statewide Opportunities for Life (OFL) ministry is reaching out to the immigrant population, regardless of documentation or legal status, through its Spanish language hotline number. We ask Catholics to cooperate zealously with OFL's efforts to be present for the unborn child, without regard for the mother's immigration status. The unborn child has a right to life.

Pope Pius XII recognized the special need for pastoral care experienced by migrants in new lands. So, too, have Kentucky's bishops. The vast majority of newcomers are Spanish speaking and most of them are Catholic. Within a very few years, 50% of the Catholic population in this nation will be Spanish speaking.

For this reason, *Every Man and Woman is the Image of God* points out that “it is imperative that we increase our efforts to attract Hispanic youth to give their lives as priests and religious. In the short term, we need to encourage Hispanic priests and religious to come to the United States to minister to the migrants from their respective countries.”

In releasing the statement, the KY Bishops acknowledge the controversial nature of the public policy debate about immigration and of the concern that many raise about the fact the eleven to twelve million newcomers are undocumented and not lawfully present.

Bishops Urge Comprehensive Reform of Immigration System

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Nonetheless, they invite Catholics and other Kentuckians to assess this crisis in light of Scripture and the moral demands of the Gospel, and not rely only on the narrow framework of civil law.

They challenge believers to support a solution to the crisis that recognizes that those who come to this country are our brothers and sisters. "We respect the right of nations to enforce their borders and to enforce reasonable immigration laws. At the same time, we regard every person, illegal immigrant, legal immigrant, or citizen, with the mind of Christ: a human person worthy of dignity and respect."

The Bishops emphasized Pope John Paul II's teaching, "For Christians, the migrant is not merely an individual to be respected in accordance with the norms established by law, but a person whose presence challenges them and whose needs become an obligation for their responsibility. 'What have you done to your brother?' (cf. Gn 4:9). The answer should not be limited

to what is imposed by law, but should be made in the manner of solidarity."

There is certainly room for respectful disagreement regarding how to repair a seriously broken immigration system. After careful study and much thought, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has rejected an "enforcement only" approach as unrealistic and not respectful of the human dignity of migrants.

Kentucky's Bishops have joined their brother bishops in appealing for responsible, comprehensive reform of the immigration system. They stated that as "a matter of justice," the solution should include the following elements:

- a broad-based earned legalization of undocumented persons;
- a temporary worker program with appropriate protections for both U.S. and foreign workers;
- changes to the family-based immigration system to reduce waiting times for family reunification; and
- restoration of due process for immigrants.

This approach to repairing the immigration system, much of which is contained in a bill passed by the U. S. Senate, upholds respect for our laws and holds accountable those who have violated it by entering the country illegally.

To hold them accountable, the Bishops have called for an "earned legalization" process for undocumented persons and the Senate bill offers a way for this to happen.

The Senate bill includes provisions demanding that heavy fines and back taxes be paid by those who are not lawfully present. In addition, those who are permitted to stay and work, must learn English and wait several years before applying for "green cards." Throughout this waiting period they must not engage in additional illegal behavior.

The complete pastoral statement, an accompanying press release, and an op-ed article by Bishop John McRaith of Owensboro are all available at www.ccky.org.



**CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE
OF KENTUCKY**

1042 Burlington Lane
Frankfort Kentucky 40601

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

Kentucky League for
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