

## *Catholics @ The Capitol Moves to New Location*

# Poverty: the Data, the Teaching, the Action Needed

Catholics @ the Capitol 2008 promises to be another exciting opportunity to take the Gospel message to Kentucky's lawmakers.

First of all, the location is new — Good Shepherd Parish Hall located at 1050 Leestown Road in Frankfort. (1050 Leestown Road is also 1050 U.S. Highway 421 South for searching location and directions online.) This location offers wonderful meeting rooms and a real church for the liturgy celebrated on Monday evening.

Nearby, the Catholic Conference has arranged for a block of rooms at the Best Western Parkside Inn, 80 Chenault Road. Please call them **no later than Jan. 15, 2008**, at 502-695-6111 to reserve a room at the special \$70-plus-tax rate. Rooms accommodate up to four persons. You must mention Catholics @ the Capitol to secure the special rate.

The first day actually begins before registration with a special workshop for those who want to learn some basic lobbying techniques. This may be especially helpful for first-timers and others who want to refresh their advocacy skills.

After a welcome from Good Shepherd pastor, Fr. Pat Stewart, participants in small groups will attend issues briefings focused on the legislative agenda of the Catholic Conference. Analysis of the legislation and talking points to be used when speaking with legislators will be discussed during this time. The entire group will then gather for further discussion of the issues and a summary of the legislation.

The new Archbishop of Louisville, Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz and Bishop Gainer will concelebrate the liturgy that evening. Priests who also wish to concelebrate should bring their albs and stoles.

Following Mass and a delicious catered dinner, a special panel of experts will engage in a discussion of poverty in Kentucky with an emphasis on revenue, healthcare, support for pregnant women and immigration.

Dr. James Ziliak, a professor of Economics at the University of Kentucky, will start us off with facts about poverty in Kentucky.

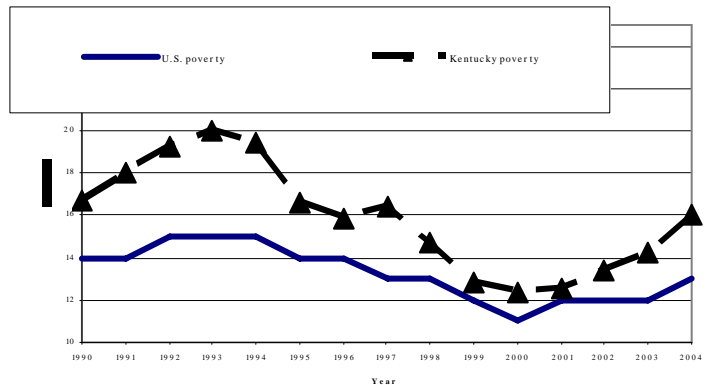
Then Reverend Larry Hostetter, a priest and moral theologian from the Diocese of Owensboro and recently installed President of Brescia College, will offer remarks on the Church's teaching as it relates to poverty.

Ruslyn Case-Compton, Director of Catholic Social service Bureau for the Lexington Diocese, will comment on our Church's response in charity to poverty.

Archbishop Kurtz is the closing panelist and will focus his remarks on our Church's response in social justice to poverty.

Those planning this two-day event decided to focus on the issue of poverty and how it affects us all because Kentucky has one of the highest poverty rates in the nation.

## Poverty in Kentucky and the U.S., 1990-2004



Graph provided by Dr. James Ziliak

Grinding poverty wears down the human spirit and attacks the God-given dignity of

those who suffer its burden. Responding to this condition and working to change its impact on poor persons is fitting for followers of a Messiah whose love for the poor is so deep that He identifies his very self with them.

On Tuesday, attendees will have the opportunity to act on the facts about poverty and what the Gospel calls for in response. After breakfast, they will travel to the Capitol and meet with State Senators and Representatives about the Catholic Conference legislative agenda.

The event closes with reports on these meetings. Faithful Citizen advocacy will continue throughout the 2008 session.

## Catholics @The Capitol 2008 Schedule

### Monday PM February 11

- 1:00—Basic Lobbying Techniques
- 2:30—Registration @ Good Shepherd Parish Hall
- 3:30—Opening Prayer & Welcome
- 3:40—Issues Briefings
- 5:00—Summary of Issues
- 5:45—Break
- 6:00—Eucharistic Celebration
- 7:00—Dinner (provided)
- 7:45—Keynote Panel Presentation on Poverty focusing on Revenue, Healthcare, Support for Pregnant Women and Immigration
- 8:45—Closing

### Tuesday, February 12

- 8:00—Continental Breakfast (provided)
- 8:15—Directions to the Capitol, further discussions on issues
- 9:00—Travel to meetings with legislators at the Capitol
- 11:30 — 1:30 Debriefing reports on meetings with legislators at a room in the Capitol

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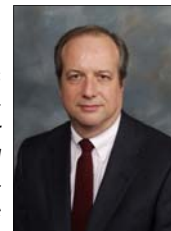
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*“We Are All Really Responsible For All.”*

## Opportunities to Make a Difference Await Us

By Ed Monahan  
Executive Director



*Protecting human life and advancing human dignity are the underlying principles that guide CCK's public policy efforts. Our work originates in the Church's social doctrine and is not driven by partisan democratic or republican agendas or by liberal or conservative ideologies. As discussed by Pope John Paul II in the encyclical On Social Concern (1987), the Church's social doctrine is not a third way between various simplistic ideologies but instead belongs to the field of moral theology. The US Catholic Bishops in their recently released Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States restate this public policy approach, "As Catholics, we are led to raise questions for political life other than "Are you better off than you were two or four years ago?" Our focus is not on party affiliation, ideology, economics, or even competence and capacity to perform duties, as important as such issues are. Rather, we focus on what protects or threatens human life and dignity."*

*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship applies Catholic teaching to major public policy issues and provides a summary of policy positions of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops under four moral priorities. A description of some of the issues CCK will be working on in 2008 at the state and federal levels under these moral priorities follows.*

### Human Life

*Human life is a gift from God. It is sacred and inviolable. We defend human life from conception until natural death and in every condition because every human person is created in the image and likeness of God. In Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship the Bishops reiterate, "Abortion and euthanasia have become preeminent threats to human life and dignity because they directly attack life itself, the most fundamental good and the condition for all others."*

In 2008 CCK will work to:

- ✓ Encourage **childbirth** by promoting an in-person informed consent law. Such bills passed in both houses in 2006, but, because of disagreements between the two chambers, the effort failed.
- ✓ Encourage **childbirth** by expanding KY's Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS) program to more women and their families, and by enacting a state tax credit to provide more assistance to those who adopt children. Currently, Kentucky's HANDS program serves first time mothers from their pregnancy until the child is two years old. Mothers receive individualized home visits and assistance on issues they face with their pregnancy.
- ✓ Encourage **childbirth** by providing a **state tax credit for those who adopt**.
- ✓ Advance **adult stem cell** research and prohibit **embryonic stem cell** research.
- ✓ Reduce **death sentences** by prohibiting the execution of the severely mentally ill.

### Family Life

*The family is the basic cell of human society. The role, responsibilities, and needs of families should be central national priorities.*

In 2008 CCK will work to:

- ✓ Advance the protection and **well-being of children** by seeking an expansion of the HANDS program, which promotes positive pregnancy

outcomes, healthy child development, safe homes and self-sufficient families through voluntary, intensive home visitation. The majority of child abuse and neglect happens to children under two years of age. Home Visitation is an opportune time to reduce high-risk situations. HANDS has increased family knowledge of hazards, reduced family stressors, brought about fewer visits to the emergency room and has reduced abuse and neglect.

- ✓ Improve the **quality of education** for all Kentucky's children by seeking adequate funding of public schools for the 75% of our Catholic children who attend these schools and for all Kentucky's children. All teachers and administrators deserve salaries and benefits that reflect principles of economic justice, as well as access to resources necessary for teachers to prepare for their important tasks.
- ✓ Seek **affordable and accessible health care** for all Kentuckians as an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right by insuring adequate funding of the KY **Medicaid** program and seeking coverage for the 526,699 uninsured persons, many of whom are children. CCK is part of a new, important Coalition, *KY Voices for Health*, which is seeking to expand health coverage.
- ✓ Expand eligibility for the KY children's health care program, **K-CHIP**, to 250% of poverty.
- ✓ Increase the **tobacco tax** to reduce smoking and raise revenue for health care for poor persons. Tobacco is the number one health threat in this state with \$1.2 billion of Medicaid funds going to treat tobacco related illnesses. And Kentucky has the second highest rate of pregnant women smoking. Medicaid is a critical program to ensure medical care for poor, elderly, vulnerable persons. It is essential that Medicaid be properly funded and not subject to budget reductions or eligibility restrictions.
- ✓ Oppose **domestic partner benefits**. CCK sup-

# Bishops' Legislative Agenda Covers Broad Range of Issues

Continued from page 2

ports health care for all as a moral right. But, CCK opposes government providing or requiring benefits based upon a domestic partnership status that equates that relationship to marriage.

## **Social Justice**

*Economic decisions and institutions should be assessed according to whether they protect or undermine the dignity of the human person.*

In 2008 CCK will work to:

- ✓ Seek a restorative, rather than a strictly punitive, approach to offenders including advancing legislation that provides timely, automatic restoration of **voting rights** to offenders who have completed their sentences.
- ✓ Support **problem gambling** awareness, prevention, and treatment efforts.
- ✓ Oppose **expansion of gambling** because of its many negative social consequences and its unreliable and regressive nature as a revenue source. At the same time CCK supports legislation that insures that the regulation of charitable gaming, which supports many Catholic Church and school ministries, is reasonable.
- ✓ Support creating a refundable state **Earned Income Tax Credit** to help lift low-income families out of poverty and a **Worker Opportunity Training tax credit** for businesses that hire persons especially in need of opportunities.
- ✓ Support a tax credit for private industries contracting with Community Rehabilitation Programs to provide **more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities**.
- ✓ Seek to lessen **predatory lending** practices.
- ✓ Oppose legislation that repeals or suspends **prevailing wage laws** or seeks to make Kentucky a **right to work** state.

## **Global Solidarity**

*The Gospel mandate to "welcome the stranger" requires Catholics to care for and provide support for all immigrants, documented and undocumented, including immigrant children.*

In 2008 CCK will work to:

- ✓ Support comprehensive immigration reform which is urgently necessary to fix a broken immigration system and should include a temporary work program with worker protections and a path to permanent residency; family reunification policies; a broad and fair legalization program; access to legal protections, including due process and public benefits; refuge for those fleeing persecution and exploitation; and policies to address the root causes of migration. The right and responsibility of nations to control their borders and to maintain the rule of law should be recognized.
- ✓ Support protection for **persons fleeing persecution** through safe haven in other countries, including the United States, especially for unaccompanied children, women, victims of human trafficking, and religious minorities.
- ✓ Support federal and state funding for **human trafficking victim services** to protect victims, especially undocumented victims.

## **Our Faith Unifies Us**

Some question why CCK is involved with such a range of issues. But the needs of people, created in the image of God, compel action on this broad spectrum of public policies because they affect human life and dignity. Protecting the life of the unborn is a preeminent public policy objective. Our responsibility to help our brothers and sisters does not end at birth. Their human dignity, a gift of God to each person, demands our attention as we live out the duty to build up the common good. Some Catholics, viewing issues through the narrow lens of party politics, struggle with aspects of the Church's

public policy agenda. Our faith unifies us when we view these issues through the lens of the life and teachings of Jesus, especially as they apply to the most vulnerable, the unborn, and to poor persons everywhere. The Bishops call all Catholics, regardless of membership in a political party, to see these public policy positions from the unity we all share.

## **The Way We Advocate**

Because of partisan self-interest and the desire to prevail at all costs, discourse in the political arena is too often harsh, disrespectful, and destructive. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* provides this guidance:

"The Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan. The Church cannot champion any candidate or party. Our cause is the defense of human life and dignity and the protection of the weak and vulnerable. The Church is engaged in the political process but should not be used. We welcome dialogue with political leaders and candidates; we seek to engage and persuade public officials.... The Church is principled but not ideological. We cannot compromise basic principles or moral teaching. We are committed to clarity about our moral teaching and to civility. In public life, it is important to practice the virtues of justice and charity that are at the core of our Tradition. We should work with others in a variety of ways to advance our moral principles."

## **Let Us Seize the Opportunities to Let Our Light Shine**

We often underestimate the power we have to influence decisions made in the public square. We would do well to heed the counsel of scripture and not let our light be hidden under a bushel basket, but seize new opportunities, speak up about issues with Christlike voices and make a difference in our state and nation.

# *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*

On Nov. 14 the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops overwhelmingly approved a statement called *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States* (formerly known as *Faithful Citizenship*) as well as a summary document, entitled "The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship." The statement urges Catholics to be involved in public life and to use the values of their faith to shape their political choices.

Both these documents, as well as other materials, are available on the CCK web page at [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org).

The Catholic Conference offers an easy, almost effortless, means for Catholics to be involved in public life and use the values of their faith to shape public policy.

Our Faithful Citizen Advocacy network already numbers more than 1,000 Kentucky Catholics who want to have a Gospel impact on policies that touch on human life and dignity.

Legislators from both parties recently spoke to a group of priests in Owensboro about how much they appreciate being approached by those who want to promote the common good, who do so in a clear, but civil, manner that is not partisan and who communicate in a principled, but not ideological, way.

Join fellow Catholics and sign up now to become a Catholic Conference Faithful Citizen Advocate. While visiting the website, you can also register for Catholics @ the Capitol, February 11 and 12, 2008.

# To Treat *Their* Suffering as *Our* Suffering

This is the third in a series of four articles related to the issue of poverty prepared by the diocesan directors of Kentucky's Catholic Charities agencies. For more information, visit [catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/](http://catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/).

By Russlyn Case-Compton

How is this possible? Thirty-five million Americans don't have enough to eat. Thirty-five percent, or 12.5 million, of these individuals are children. The lack of food certainly isn't the cause. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that 96 billion pounds of food goes to waste annually in our nation.

I believe one major contributor to hunger lies in our collective belief in the 'American Dream,' the conviction that hard work alone provides citizens with access to the resources needed to provide not only a subsistence existence, but a life of abundance. And failure to achieve the American Dream, lies not with the community, but with the individual, who lacked the gumption to achieve.

As many of us are now coming to realize, this notion merely gives us permission to blame people for their troubles, freeing us to enjoy a guilt-free life. It is time we as a nation acknowledge a higher truth, that we are all one in the body of Christ; to allow even a single individual to go hungry weakens the entire body.

Food insecurity is a measure of how vulnerable a household is to hunger. It can range from worrying about the ability to purchase food, to skipping an occasional meal, to going an entire day without food. Nationally the highest rates of food insecurity can be found among single mother households, households with children, and African-American or Hispanic households. Food insecurity exists in both major cities and rural areas, and is especially prevalent in the Deep South.<sup>1</sup>

In Kentucky, food insecurity has increased over the last six years.<sup>2</sup> For many households, receiving a monthly food box isn't just a once-in-a-lifetime emergency stopgap, but a regular, essential source of support which makes survival on a minimum wage income possible. God's Pantry Food Bank in Lexington estimates 159,000 individuals received their help in 2005, up by a third from 2001 totals.<sup>3</sup>

The plight of hungry Kentucky families is frightening. Over 50% report they must choose between paying for food and paying for housing. Almost one-third must choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care. One in five adults reduces portions or skips meals almost every month because they don't have enough money for food.<sup>4</sup> Choices such as these rob people of their basic human dignity, shame us as a nation and damage our relationship with the Risen Lord who calls us "to love our neighbor as ourself."

Moral considerations aside, hunger has a grave impact on our society's future. Children who are hungry struggle academically and are more likely to get into trouble at school.<sup>5</sup> They are more likely to be ill and require more medical care. Hunger affects a child's social development resulting in more aggressive behavior, higher levels of hyperactivity, anxiety and/or passivity, and difficulty getting along with others. Food insecurity has been linked to higher rates of obe-



Ruslyn  
Case-Compton

sity, as poor families are more likely to subsist on a diet of less expensive carbohydrates (bread, rice, macaroni and cheese), excluding more expensive, and more nutritious, fruits and vegetables. As we are beginning to discover, obesity has long-range impacts for our workforce and healthcare system.

Food Stamps, WIC and the National School Lunch Program are important supports for many of Kentucky's children. As more families sink into poverty, reliance on these programs is growing. The number of children receiving food stamps in the Commonwealth grew by almost one-third between 2000 and 2005.<sup>6</sup> More than half of the children eating lunch in our schools in 2004-05 were on the school lunch program.<sup>7</sup> Yet as those people who have taken the Food Stamp Challenge have learned, trying to feed a family on the average benefit of \$3 per person per day is difficult.<sup>8</sup> The social supports currently in place are not going to eliminate hunger in our community. New ways to address the issue must be found.

It is easy to blame the poor for their hunger. Too many packs of cigarettes. Too little ambition. Poor money management skills. But these arguments are both simplistic and naive. While it may be true some families suffer the consequences of poor choices, it's not the sole cause of poverty or hunger. Our own personal choices and lifestyles may contribute to the poverty of others. Political and corporate decisions, made without regard to human cost, can either improve or diminish the quality of life in our state and our nation.

Our society has much in common with the rich man in Luke 16:19-31, who ignores the beggar Lazarus at his gate, opting instead for a lifestyle of self-indulgent pleasure. We too have adopted a morality which values the acquisition of material goods and personal gratification over concern for the poor and vulnerable. This attitude is an affront to our Lord, who calls us to respond generously to others, to treat their suffering as *our* suffering.

Catholic Charities' Campaign to Reduce Poverty calls us to abandon our consumer society and to seek a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities so everyone may live and grow in fulfillment of the Divine plan. The minimum wage increase which happened over the summer was definitely a step in the right direction. If passed, proposals before the General Assembly to create a Kentucky Earned Income Tax Credit, increase workforce training and expand K-TAP benefits would further help poor families put food on their tables, pay rent, fill prescriptions, clothe their children, and, maybe, have a little left for recreation. I hope you will lend your support to these measures.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.strength.org/response/hungerfacts/#foodsecurity>

<sup>2</sup>"Household Food Security in the United States, 2004," <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err11/err11.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>"Hunger in Central and Eastern Kentucky 2006", <http://www.godspantry.org/files/press/HUNGER2006B.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>ibid.

<sup>5</sup>[http://kyyouth.org/Publications/KIDS\\_COUNT\\_2006/2006+County+Data+Book+v3.pdf](http://kyyouth.org/Publications/KIDS_COUNT_2006/2006+County+Data+Book+v3.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>ibid.

<sup>7</sup>ibid.

<sup>8</sup><http://foodstampchallenge.typepad.com/>

Ruslyn Case-Compton is Diocesan Director of Lexington's Catholic Social Services Bureau and Secretary for the Secretariat for Social Services. She is a member of the Social Concerns Committee of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky.

**System changes are necessary to ensure good outcomes for all children and families, not just the ones lucky enough to have a good teacher or caseworker on their side.**

*2007 Kentucky KIDS COUNT Data Book*

## More Than 5,000 Calls in 2007

# Volunteers Needed to Continue Work of Opportunities For Life

Each January Kentucky's four Catholic Bishops invite Catholics to join them in supporting the Opportunities for Life (OFL) office which they established to offer those facing an untimely pregnancy options other than abortion.

With the help of a statewide network of volunteers the OFL office operates two toll free helplines.

Catholics can support this office financially by contributing to the annual collection set for the weekend of January 19/20, 2008 and by volunteering their time to the program. The generous donations received in this special collection help fund the office expenses and the cost of operating the two helplines.

Because of the recent increase in the number of Spanish speaking residents in Kentucky, OFL needs not only English speaking volunteers, but also bi-lingual volunteers who speak Spanish.

To prepare volunteers to respond effectively to the clients, OFL offers training and ongoing support in each Kentucky diocese. Volunteers often speak of the profound impact the ministry has on their lives and how it deepens their relationship with God and allows them an opportunity to develop supportive relationships with others in this ministry.

In addition to the initial training, volunteers are offered ongoing training and development as well as opportunities for days of prayer and reflection with other volunteers.

### Training dates for 2008:

Louisville Diocese	March 6-8
Owensboro Diocese	April 4-5
Covington Diocese	March 1 & 15
Lexington Diocese	May 17 & /31
Additional dates will be set as needed.	

Volunteers have had an especially busy year. By Dec. 31 they will have served more than 5,000 clients. Telephone volunteers answer the 24-hour/7-day statewide helpline from their home as

they assist abortion-vulnerable women and men. Volunteers offer a caring, non-judgmental presence to clients and guide them to helpful local resources.

Through the generosity of the Catholic community in Kentucky, OFL can afford to pay to list the toll free telephone numbers in nearly every phonebook in the state as well as campus newspapers and resource books. This generosity also allows volunteers access to the most current training materials.

OFL has begun a poster campaign on every Catholic college campus in the state. Hopefully, this campaign will grow to include many additional public and private colleges in Kentucky. These posters, placed in over one hundred locations on each campus, increase awareness of the helpline which will support women in making life-affirming choices for themselves and their unborn children.

## Anytime — Any Day

# A Typical OFL Helpline Call

**Helpline Listener:** "Opportunities for Life. This is \_\_\_\_\_. How may I help you?"

**Caller:** "I need to get an abortion. Do you do abortions?"

Many of the helpline calls begin like this. OFL listeners are trained and skilled to respond in a way that "calms the storm" long enough for the caller to hear about other options. Recognizing the desperation of the caller, the OFL volunteer's listening is non-judgmental and compassionate. The listener prayerfully relies on God's grace to give her/him the words to speak and to give the caller a receptive heart so that a mother can choose life for herself and her unborn child.

The OFL listener can first offer the caller a referral to Catholic Charities or Catholic Social Services. Those agencies are staffed with professionals who will walk with the woman (and if necessary, her family) from the moment of the first call to several months postpartum. Other excellent resources are also available and the OFL listeners know how, where and when to offer their availability.

In most instances OFL does not know what choice a caller finally makes, but there are those blessed occasions when a caller calls helpline again to say that she did, indeed, choose life.

There are also occasions when a woman calls and tearfully reports the pain and loss she is experiencing due to an abortion. Again, the OFL listener responds with compassion and refers her to Project Rachael or Rachael's Vineyard, a ministry to those who've experienced an abortion.

Every call made to the helpline is logged with a brief description of the call. This anonymous information is sent to volunteers who have agreed to pray daily for the callers. You're invited to hold the ministry of OFL and the callers in your prayer, too.

## Opportunities For Life's Commitment to Care Includes:

- Clients are served without regard to age, race, income, nationality, religious affiliation, disability or other arbitrary circumstances.
- Clients are treated with kindness, compassion and in a caring manner.
- Client information is held in strict and absolute confidence. Client information is only disclosed as required by law and when necessary to protect the client or others against imminent harm.
- Clients receive accurate information about pregnancy, fetal development, lifestyle issues, and related concerns.
- We do not refer for abortions, nor do we offer or recommend abortifacients. We are committed to offering accurate information about abortion procedures and risks.





This is the eighth 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](http://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.

## KY Catholic Dioceses Reach Out to Immigrants

By Sr. Regina Marie Baker, CDP

The four Catholic Dioceses of Covington, Lexington, Louisville, and Owensboro, Kentucky have been involved in helping immigrants and refugees for many years. Why would the Church in our Commonwealth have an interest in welcoming and befriending strangers?

The resettlement and support for the general well-being of those who must leave their country of origin stems from God's call in the Old Testament, "So you too must befriend the alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt." (Dt. 10:19) And in a more recent document, *Ecclesia In America* (1999), Pope John Paul II states that the Church "is committed to spare no effort in developing her own pastoral strategy among immigrant people, in order to help them settle in their new land and to foster a welcoming attitude among the local population in the belief that a mutual openness will bring enrichment to all."

The Resurrection of Christ was the climax to Jesus' mission of teaching and healing. That same mission was given to the Church on Pentecost. "The triumph of grace in the Resurrection of Christ plants hope in the hearts of all believers, and the Spirit works in the Church to unite all peoples of all races and cultures into the one family of God." (Ephesians 2:17-20)

It is not unusual for people who join together in a common purpose to formulate a statement of their mission. Church communities are a good example of this. An organization's Mission Statement gives others an insight into the group's identity and values. Each of the four Dioceses of Kentucky has a Mission Statement and out of this self-description flows the pastoral services provided within those regions.

The Church of the **Diocese of Covington** embraces the value of the sanctity of all human life and creation and commits itself to compassion and active support for the poor and oppressed. The diocese responded wholeheartedly to the plight of Vietnamese refugees in 1975 and had a Resettlement Program for about fifteen years.



Covington

To coordinate efforts on behalf of Spanish speaking immigrants in the Northern Kentucky area, Bishop Roger Foy established the parish of Cristo Rey, in Erlanger. Soon thereafter, Fr. John Cahill and Sr. Juana Mendez S.C. established **Centro de Amistad** for social outreach programs in the parish. These programs include: English as a Second Language, Intensive English, GED preparation, citizenship classes, a home buyers program, a low income tax clinic, a job clearing house, carpenter and electrician apprenticeship programs, referral services for family counseling and legal services, a family computer training program.

Health issues are a high priority and in response to these the parish added a full time health advocate to the parish staff in July, 2006. This is in addition to the "Promotores de Salud" (Health promoters) program and an annual health fair. The parish is able to provide these services on Church premises because they partner with other agencies whose assistance is deeply appreciated. These in-

clude: Gateway Community College, Northern Kentucky University, Kenton County Public Library, Area Health Education Council, Catholic Social Services, Northern Kentucky Home Builders Association, Children's Hospital of Cincinnati, and others.

Catholic parishes in Carrollton and Maysville, Kentucky also provide pastoral services for the Hispanic community. Popular religiosity is part of the fabric of a people's identity and so, in parishes like St. John the Evangelist in Carrollton, much attention is given to religious traditions to help first generation Catholic immigrants adjust to life in the United States. These traditions include: an outdoor Way of the Cross around the town that culminates in the Good Friday service in both Spanish and English, bilingual religious celebrations for Christmas, Ash Wednesday, and Easter Vigil, and forty nights of prayer in preparation for December 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. On December 11, the celebration of the feast includes a procession first by car, then on foot to Church where Mass and a fiesta are celebrated until 11 p.m. The hour before midnight is a time of prayer that ends with the singing of "Las Mañanitas", a traditional hymn that greets the dawn of the feast in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The Church of the **Diocese of Lexington** identifies itself as "a diverse pilgrim people" and "In response to our baptismal call...we reach out to all, especially those who are poor in the eyes of the world..." The Diocese challenges itself as a pilgrim people to journey with immigrants who are also a pilgrim people and, being strangers in a world vastly different from their country of origin, are often considered poor in the estimation of the world.



Lexington

**Jesús, el Buen Pastor Centro Católico** provides a number of pastoral services for Hispanics in Lexington and provides a Catholic environment where people can feel comfortable with symbols of their faith. Among the activities hosted at the Center are youth group activities, Spanish classes, ESL classes, GED classes, classes to learn more about the Bible and the Catholic faith, and a women's group "Damas". This latter group has a renovated apartment where women learn sewing, crafts, and cake decorating. It is a place of shared interests and values.

Eighteen Churches in the Diocese of Lexington offer Mass and some religious celebrations in Spanish throughout the year. The rural parishes provide a place where people involved in agriculture and factory work can turn for help to learn or understand English, to have someone interpret in medical or other emergencies, and to find fellowship with other immigrants scattered throughout the counties. In Montgomery County, there is a Migrant Coalition out of the Extension Office in which people of the parish join with health care workers, teachers, and local employers in order to seek ways to provide better services to individuals and families.

In some of the larger parishes, the numbers of Hispanics make it feasible to have full-time bi-lingual pastoral staff to provide leadership formation programs, prayer and Bible study groups, youth and young adult ministry, retreats for couples. The Diocesan Hispanic Pastoral Plan clearly outlines action steps that can be taken to strengthen the values and utilize the talents of the people.

The Church of the **Archdiocese of Louisville**, "striving for fullness of life in God," accepts a mission to serve "human needs, especially

Sr. Regina Marie Baker, CDP, is Pastoral Director of St. Patrick parish in the Diocese of Lexington, Kentucky.



Louisville

those of the poor and oppressed...fostering justice and reconciliation among all God's people."

Catholic Charities of Louisville has a Migration and Refugee Services program in which volunteers help set up apartments for new families and a mentors program which helps new arrivals learn English and familiarizes them with community services such as libraries, parks, bus services, as well as introducing immigrants to local ways of shopping, cleaning, and preparing foods. Volunteers also help with day care while immigrant family members attend ESL classes, help prepare "Welcome Baskets", or help unload trucks that carry donations of furniture, household items, food and hygiene items.

There are fourteen parishes in the Archdiocese of Louisville that formally serve the pastoral needs of immigrants. Saint John Vianney parish offers support to the Vietnamese community. The other parishes offer a variety of pastoral services to Hispanics that include medical assistance in the form of translators and transportation to medical appointments, social services such as food, clothing, ESL classes, women's support groups, and day care services. Eleven of these Churches have Spanish Masses.

Epiphany Church is one of many that supports Eastern Area Community Ministries, an ecumenical ministry that helps people in need. This group established Latino Outreach Services in 2003. A parish grant helps to pay the salary of the director of this program. The parishioners of Epiphany Church are integral to Latino Outreach Services, helping to provide transportation for clients and a variety of other needs. Because of the addition of the bi-lingual director, Eastern Area Community Ministries can now offer assistance with food, clothing, rent, utilities, and special needs for infants, regardless of the immigration status of the individual or family.

Saint Rita Catholic Church has a community outreach person who helps people find jobs, offers interpreting services for medical care and to enroll children in school, refers people for legal assistance, and offers English classes. The parish has a summer camp in Spanish for children, an Academy that teaches dance and acting, advocacy for justice for immigrants, assistance with immigration papers when possible, training for catechists, annual retreats, a prayer group and an AA group.

The Church of the **Diocese of Owensboro** affirms "that Jesus left the faith community - called Church - to carry on His mission into time." The people commit themselves not only to proclaim and celebrate God's love, but also to reach out "to all God's children, especially those who have special needs, e.g. the homeless, lonely, sick, hungry, etc.," thus putting love and faith into action.

The Diocese of Owensboro serves the western portion of the state. Patricia Murphy, Director of Justice for Immigrants Campaign, summed up the pastoral services presently available for Hispanic immigrants in this way: "There are thirteen parishes that



Owensboro

offer Mass and varying levels of educational and outreach services. These include: catechesis in Spanish with trained Hispanic catechists, Bible study and prayer groups, youth groups and a young missionaries post-confirmation group, interpreting services, leadership formation through committees and councils, response to physical needs through St. Vincent de Paul groups and Hispanic ministers, advocacy in the larger community through ministerial associations, community organizations and agencies, and local government."

In addition to the parishes, there are four centers. **La Plaza Immigrant Community Center** in Owensboro offers an ESL program, a women's group, community organizing, leadership formation, computer skills, health education and screenings. This Center is run by an ecumenical non-profit group and helps connect immigrants to the community.

The **International Center** in Bowling Green is a resource center for immigrants and refugees that helps with immigration applications, interpretation, and community resources.

**La Casa de Migrante** in Paducah offers ESL classes, interpretation services and general community awareness.

The newest center, **HOLA** in Todd County, also offers ESL classes, advocacy in the community, help with immediate needs and outreach to migrants in this rural area.

The Bishops commend Church communities that have established migrant shelters that provide appropriate pastoral and social services to migrants. The Church encourages dioceses to sponsor pertinent social services for migrants and immigrants, particularly affordable legal services. In many rural dioceses, the primary site of pastoral outreach for farm workers is the migrant camp, usually at a significant distance from the parish church. In this context we encourage local parishioners to be prepared as home missionaries and the migrants themselves to be prepared as catechists and outreach workers.

All four of the Dioceses of Kentucky have been active in promoting "Justice for Immigrants," an initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, to strive for reform of Immigration Laws. In a letter to Senators Mitch McConnell and Jim Bunning on March 9, 2006, the Bishops urged comprehensive reform that will address the roots causes of immigration, such as global poverty; provide a temporary worker program with appropriate protections for both U.S. and foreign workers; restore due process for immigrants; and keep families intact.

Borrowing phrases from the Mission Statements of the Catholic Dioceses of Kentucky we might summarize by saying: Being a diverse pilgrim people ourselves, we assert that Jesus calls the Church to carry on His mission in time. We value the sanctity of all human life that seeks its fullness in God. In response to our baptismal call, we reach out to all and commit ourselves to compassion and active support of those who are considered poor in the estimation of the world. Our hope is to foster justice and reconciliation among all God's people.

### Kentucky Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools

support parents who choose a faith based education for their children. They send nearly 46,732 children to 98 Catholic elementary schools, 25 secondary schools; and 5 post-secondary schools. These schools exist to give parents a choice, not to compete with the public school systems. We believe the state has some responsibility for the education of children in nonpublic schools. So, we seek appropriate financial assistance that is constitutional. Asking for and receiving our fair share is important as the number of our schools declines and the cost to operate them continues to challenge our available fiscal resources. Since 1995, 30 Catholic schools closed for lack of funding.

The state has a significant fiscal interest in our continued ability

to keep Catholic schools open. With the state and federal funding per elementary and secondary public school student at \$8,732, the 41,023 elementary and secondary Catholic school students represent a savings of over \$358 million per year to KY and federal taxpayers or \$716 million each biennium in state dollars. If the closing of Catholic schools continues, the state's financial obligations for education will increase.

**Catholic Hospitals and Nursing Homes** provide healthcare to many in our state through 16 acute care hospitals, 32 nursing facilities and other Catholic-sponsored service organizations including hospice, home health, assisted living, and senior housing. These ministries generate millions upon millions of dollars that benefit their local communities and the entire Commonwealth.

**Conference Registration Deadline: Monday, February 4, 2008**

**Hotel Registration Deadline: Tuesday, January 15, 2008**

# Many Gifts, One Spirit: Catholics @ The Capitol 2008

February 11 & 12, 2008 at Good Shepherd Parish

1050 Leestown Road, Frankfort, KY

Join Catholics from across the state for a 2-day legislative education and advocacy conference. Our faith calls us to be Faithful Citizens actively engaged in shaping a society that respects human life and seeks and promotes the Common Good.

If staying overnight, call Best Western Parkside Inn **NO LATER THAN JAN. 15, 2008** at 502.695-6111 to reserve a room at the special rate of \$70.00 plus tax (1-4 Persons). Be sure to mention Catholics @ The Capitol to receive this special rate.

**Registration Fee: \$40.00 per person — includes evening banquet and breakfast.**

*(There is no financial aid available through the Catholic Conference of Kentucky.)*

**Please mail completed forms and the \$40.00 per person registration fee to  
Catholic Conference of Kentucky, 1042 Burlington Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601**

**PLEASE PRINT**

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List parish committee involvement if any \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete the following if known.**

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Additional or special needs you may have \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate the day(s) you are attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Monday; \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday; \_\_\_\_\_ Both Days**

For questions about registration contact Karen Chambers at 502-875-4345 or e-mail [cckstaff@ccky.org](mailto:cckstaff@ccky.org).

**You can also register at [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org); mail us your \$40 registration fee.**



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