

## *Poverty and Policy Options for Kentucky*

By  
James P. Ziliak, Ph.D.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR A NEW "CREATIVITY" IN CHARITY, NOT ONLY BY ENSURING THAT HELP IS EFFECTIVE BUT ALSO BY "GETTING CLOSE" TO THOSE WHO SUFFER, SO THAT THE HAND THAT HELPS IS SEEN NOT AS A HUMILIATING HANDOUT BUT AS A SHARING BETWEEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

POPE JOHN PAUL II, *NOVO MILLENIO INEUNTE*

Surveys suggest that nearly two-thirds of Americans believe that helping the poor should be a national legislative priority, but in equal numbers we reject welfare. As a society built on the ethos of hard work and self determination we tend to eschew policies that appear to run counter to that ethos, and rightly or wrongly, enemy number one is welfare. Pope John Paul II astutely recognized this tension in his apostolic letter at the close of the Jubilee Year, and thus his challenge for "a new creativity in charity." In this article I discuss several new directions for poverty policy in Kentucky that are responsive to the need to serve the poor and at the same time foster economic self-sufficiency.

The Pope's challenge applies full force here in Kentucky given the Commonwealth's long struggle against poverty. Over the past three years an average of 16.4 percent of Kentuckians had annual incomes below the Federal poverty line, making Kentucky the fourth poorest state in the nation behind Mississippi, Louisiana, and New Mexico. Although our ranking has moved up and down over the years, we consistently rank in the "top 10" of poorest states. Many of the counties in Eastern Kentucky have poverty rates of 25 percent or higher. Indeed, the USDA defines a county as being *persistently poor* if its poverty rate in each decennial Census since 1970 exceeds 20 percent. Their analysis reveals that persistently poor counties are clustered in five main regions of the country: Appalachian Kentucky, the Black Belt Region of Alabama and Georgia, the Mississippi Delta, the Texas colonias along the Rio Grande River, and Native American reservations in New Mexico and the Dakotas. Even though the racial, ethnic, and economic composition varies widely across these five regions, they share in common high crime rates, high drop out rates, high infant mortality rates, high rates of drug use, and a host of poor health and economic outcomes. But poverty in Kentucky is not restricted to rural areas—in the 2000 Census the Louisville metro area had ten Census tracts (each tract has a population of 5,000 persons) with poverty rates in excess of 40 percent and Lexington had nine tracts with poverty rates in excess of 20 percent. Poverty

in Kentucky is pervasive, and it is costing us dearly.

So where do we go from here? I liken our fight against persistent poverty in Kentucky to a basketball team using a "full-court press" against an aggressive offense: in the "backcourt" our defense against poverty is to surround our children with early childhood interventions and formal education up through higher ed; as we proceed into our working years at the "midcourt" our defense comes in the form of a comprehensive system of work supports for those able to work and yet facing low and volatile incomes, as well as assistance to those who are displaced from work or disabled on the job; and in the "frontcourt" years of retirement our defense is to provide health and pension systems on sound financial footing. I focus my brief article on the issues leading up to retirement.

In basketball a press is most effective if it steals the ball in the frontcourt as it offers an ideal scoring opportunity. So, too, with fighting poverty. If we successfully sow the seeds of education at very young ages then we provide the best form of self insurance over the life course because education is an avenue for upward mobility and provides greater insulation from the sometimes brutal vagaries of the business cycle. Growing social science evidence suggests that for the state (and nation) to lower poverty in the long run, high school and college completion rates must rise. Higher educational attainment translates into a workforce more capable of effectively exploiting modern technologies—technologies that fuel economic growth and development. One area that currently suffers from under-investment and yet offers promise is Pre-K programs. Evaluations of both random assignment preschool experiments such as the Perry Preschool Project as well as the Head Start program revealed that program participants were significantly more likely to complete high school, to work as adults, to have higher earnings as adults, and to commit no crime. Indeed, the evaluations showed that the benefits of the program exceeded the costs by a factor of three or greater. This has spawned a burgeoning national movement for universal preschool, including a proposal here in Kentucky marshaled by the Pritchard Committee. However, both as a means to control costs and because the returns to taxpayers are likely higher, one strategy for Kentucky is to initially target the programs to children from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Based on the experimental evaluations, the programs in Kentucky would be most effective if they combine trained staff and low child-teacher ratios with both center-based care and home visits in order to secure parental/caregiver commitment to their child's education. We have to find a mechanism (or multiple mechanisms) to reduce the drop out problem in our schools, and Pre-K programs offer

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*"We Are All Really Responsible For All."*

# Lawsuit Seeks Clarification on Transfer of Funds Resulting in Increases in Charitable Gaming Fees

By Ed Monahan  
Executive Director

The Louisville Soccer Alliance, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, and the Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Henderson, Kentucky, filed a lawsuit July 23, 2008 seeking clarification of the law regarding the continued practice of transferring unused, excess funds collected from licensees for the operation of the department of charitable gaming into the general fund and the resulting increases in the charitable gaming fee, including the recent increase in the fee.

We believe it is against the law for the State to use funds generated through private, charitable gaming for purposes other than paying the legitimate expenses of the Department of Charitable Gaming (DCG). Unspent, surplus funds designated to operate the DCG should lead to the reduction in the fees paid by charitable organizations to operate the DCG, and not be taken by the State and used as a general tax for other state purposes. Charities and their supporters expect the monies they raise and spend will be used for charitable purposes and not to balance the State's budget.

There is significant harm caused by this unconstitutional and illegal conduct by the state. Charitable gaming provides significant funds that help Catholic ministries. There are 406,000 Catholics, 296 Catholic parishes, and 127 Catholic schools educating more than 48,000 students in Kentucky. Many of these Catholic churches and schools benefit from festivals and events that involve gaming. There are 219 Catholic charities with a charitable gaming license representing 30% of all charitable gaming licenses issued in Kentucky. Thousands of volunteers staff these Catholic charitable gaming events. As a result of their hard work, the Catholic community throughout Kentucky is able to educate thousands of children and provide shelter, food, medicine, and utilities to thousands of low income individuals through its many outreach ministries.

The Department of Charitable Gaming provides indispensable oversight and agrees that charitable gaming licensees have a responsibility to fund the oversight so no taxpayer money is used to regulate the gaming. The harm suffered by us is in the transfer of unspent funds which should be used to fund the DCG. Since 1998, Kentucky has transferred \$5,991,200 of

these surplus funds from the DCG. In the budget just passed, the General Assembly took \$700,000. As a result of this transfer, effective July 1, 2008, the Department of Charitable Gaming has raised the fee to operate its office from 0.53% of gross receipts to 0.60% of gross receipts, resulting in a further direct loss to charitable organizations of funds needed for their charitable mission.

Patrons of charitable events, charitable organizations and their ministries have been given the wrong impression about how their contributions are being used. We and the other plaintiffs are asking that funds transferred be returned to the DCG Trust and Agency Account and that the DCG fee be reduced to a percentage that does not result in the collection of an excess of funds needed to operate its department.

## *New Resource on Climate Change in Appalachia Available*

The Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) is distributing, "Climate Change: Our Faith Response," to Catholic dioceses in the Appalachian region. The DVD comes with a study guide about the care of creation and humanity's duty for stewardship.

The DVD was produced from footage of a teleconference on global climate change held in Appalachia in 2007. It discusses the science behind global warming, how it will effect the poor and humanity's moral responsibility to act.

"This program teaches about the integrity of creation," Fr. John Rausch, CCA's director, said, "and we hope it raises awareness about creation as a precious gift from God and how climate change will particularly affect the poor and vulnerable. We in Appalachia see the direct effects of cheap energy on the health of people and the devastation of the land." Rausch added, "The church must raise a prophetic voice on the eve of this impending environmental crisis."

For more information on the DVD contact CCA at 885 Orchard Run Road, Spencer, WV 25276 Ph: 304-927-5798.



## *Kentucky Bishops Reconfirm Policy on Political Activity*

The Catholic community rightly participates in the political life of the nation and the state. Nonetheless, Kentucky's four Catholic Bishops have sent the following letter detailing what sort of political activity is permitted by the Church and those who officially represent it. The documents mentioned in the letter by the bishops are all available on the Catholic Conference of Kentucky website: [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org). As stated below, questions regarding this important issue should be directed to the Conference by calling our office: (502) 875-4345.

July 3, 2008

RE: Faithful Citizenship and CCK Policy on Political Activity

Dear Pastor, Pastoral Director, School Superintendent, Catholic Charities Director,

In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (FCFC), we stated that in "the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation." In a series of communications to leaders in all four dioceses (August 2006, April 2007, and August 2007) we have

Encouraged active participation in the public square, and  
Emphasized the theological and legal reasons for our longstanding policy prohibiting partisan political activity by churches and individuals representing our church acting in their official capacities.

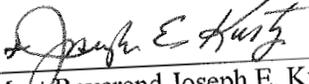
We write again because the Internal Revenue Service has a 2008 Political Activity Compliance Initiative and is appropriately reminding us that churches, may not "participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office."

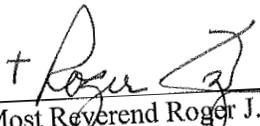
The IRS has identified several areas that warrant more refined attention. Those areas are attached, along with a USCCB document that sets out activities that are encouraged and those that are prohibited.

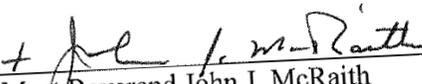
The Office of General Counsel of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued *Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations*. These guidelines provide a commonsense explanation of the rules with practical examples. We encourage you to review our prior letters, the USCCB *Guidelines*, the USCCB *Faithful Citizenship* resources and to educate your parish leaders on them. You can access these materials through links found in the right hand column on home page of the Catholic Conference of Kentucky's website: [www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org).

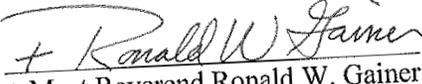
Our longstanding teaching is simple. The "Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan." (FCFC n. 58). We remain grateful for your continued faithful encouragement of responsible citizenship and the implementation of the CCK Policy on Political Activity. Please direct any questions regarding this matter to the Catholic Conference of Kentucky, 502-875-4345.

Sincerely,

  
+ Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz  
Archbishop of Louisville

  
+ Most Reverend Roger J. Foys  
Bishop of Covington

  
+ Most Reverend John J. McRaith  
Bishop of Owensboro

  
+ Most Reverend Ronald W. Gainer  
Bishop of Lexington

## Child Sexual Abuse

# Awareness Makes a Difference in a Child's Life

By Rashmi Adi Brown  
Director of Program and Prevention Services  
Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky

Child Sexual Abuse is a crime no one wants to talk, hear or think about. But the sad reality is that everyday in our Commonwealth, children are sexually abused. According to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, there were 3,468 children reported to the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) as victims of child sexual abuse.

Major contributing risk factors that can lead to child abuse and neglect are: poverty, substance abuse and domestic violence.

Child sexual abuse can occur in every socioeconomic class and spans across all socioeconomic, race and gender boundaries.

Child sexual abuse is defined as any physical contact, including incest, genital exposure, fondling of the private parts of the child's body; oral or anal sex, intercourse, and photographing or exposing a child to sexual content, all with the intent of sexually stimulating the adult. Child sexual abuse can be committed by an adult man or a woman or an older child in a position of power over the child.

Perpetrators of child sexual abuse are most often individuals who are known, trusted and loved by the child. Rarely are the perpetrators strangers to the children they abuse. Perpetrators often befriend and "groom" or coerce children by offering them rewards or special privileges. These rewards can extend from a simple act of kindness, such as becoming a friend to a child who has no friends, to taking them places and buying them gifts. Perpetrators can be parents, older siblings, cousins, grandparents, or the paramour to the mother or father. He or she can be a coach, youth group leader, a teacher, a neighbor. In short, child sexual abuse perpetrators are found among all professions, age groups, races, income levels and in all of our cities.

It is important to remember that very often perpetrators use lies to cause fear or make the "sexual act" something that must remain a secret between the abuser and the victim. They do so to coerce the child into not telling anyone. They use their position of authority or their role as an adult to intimidate the child. Perpetrators also intimidate children by causing them to believe that the abusive incidents are their fault; some threaten to harm loved ones or pets should the child divulge the secrets. The child is also frequently led to believe that due to the child's age, the child will not be believed by authority figures. Abusers also intimidate by tell-

ing children that the police will remove them from their homes and they will have to live somewhere else. Perpetrators also try to convince victims that, if other people find out, they will think the child is weird, that they will laugh at the child and they will lose their friends.

Child sexual abuse has life long ramifications that may include: mental health/substance abuse issues, low self-esteem, low self confidence, sexual acting out, depression, anxiety, suicide attempts and poor interpersonal relationships.

Children who are sexually abused often feel sad, angry, guilty or confused about what is happening to them. If the abuser is someone with whom the child is close and/or in whom the child places a great deal of trust and confidence, then they frequently have long-standing problems with developing intimacy with others and often question how someone who loves them could have done hurtful things to them.

These children also feel they are to blame for the abuse because they have gone along with what the abuser wanted from them. It is confusing to children because they may enjoy the attention from the perpetrator that occurs during the abusive incident. The abuse can cause them to have nightmares, changes in behavior, loss of appetite, developmental regression, social withdrawal or intense fears of people, places and/or things.

If a child comes to you and discloses they are being sexually abused please remember the following:

- Believe the child – children rarely lie about sexual abuse.
- Tell the child it was not their fault, that you are glad they told you and that you believe them and will help them get the help they need.
- Do not promise that you will not tell anyone as you will further be endangering the child AND breaking the law.

If you know or suspect that a child is being sexually abused the law requires that you make a report by calling the Department of Community Based Services child abuse reporting hotline at 1-800-7852-6200. You can make the call anonymously.

If you are unsure about the nature of child sexual abuse is or wonder whether or not what you are observing might be indicators of child sexual abuse please call Prevent Child Abuse KY at 1-800-CHILDREN.

Your awareness and knowledge of child sexual abuse and what you can do about it, may make a difference in a child's life.



Imagine a World Without  
Child Abuse...

Together We Can  
Make It Happen.

## 1-800-CHILDREN



This is the tenth 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.*

## “Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock”

By Rev. Ken Mikulcik  
Pastor, St. Joseph Parish, Mayfield Kentucky



As the decades have gone by without protection given to human life before birth, we have probably all reflected upon the meaning of being both anti-abortion and being pro-life. Being anti-abortion certainly implies a political and legal goal of providing protection for the unborn. But we have all recognized that being pro-life is a richer concept than simply being anti-abortion. We have realized that being pro-life means embracing the difficulties of life, making sacrifices, and recognizing the dignity of each person in whatever stage of life he or she is in.

One of my favorite ways of framing the pro-life perspective is in terms of hospitality, which is a virtue. Hospitality is the habit of being a welcoming person, looking out for the other, and making room for that one. Is that not what so many pregnancy care centers aim to accomplish? How often have we desired that all human life not only be recognized as having a right to live, but even more to be welcomed! We have recognized that hearts need to change, and that a change in law, although necessary, is not enough. We desire that hearts and homes be open to welcoming these little ones.

But as it stands, we know that we have much work to do in that area, evangelizing our culture so that mothers and fathers will not only welcome the new life in the womb as a gift but also offer the “hospitality” that is responsible and generous parenthood. Many values that we see around us do not correspond with this. We are not accustomed to welcoming, but on the contrary, to protecting and defending what is ours, and eliminating the risk of the disturbance that an outsider might cause. People who are not familiar to us or similar to us in speech or custom we keep at arms length. There would be exceptions, but can you remember the last time a stranger was brought into your home to share a meal?

There is such a story in the book of Genesis. By the terebinth of Mamre, in the heat of the day, Abraham saw three men who were apparently not from the local area. “When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them; and bowing to the ground, he said: ‘Sir, if I may ask you this favor, please do not go on past your servant. Let some water be brought, that you may bathe your feet, and then rest yourselves under the tree. Now that you have come this close to your servant, let me bring you a little food, that you may refresh yourselves; and afterward you may go on your way.’” “‘Very well,’ they replied, ‘do as you have said’” [Gen 18:2-5]. Abraham offers exceptional hospitality to these three strangers who are in some way a manifestation of the LORD. Receiving his hospitality, they ask about Sarah, Abraham’s wife, and then one of them

promises that he will return in a year and she will have a son. So Abraham’s hospitality or reception of the lives of these three who have come from another place is echoed in the reception of life in the womb of Sarah who, with her husband, was advanced in age. The strangers’ life is welcomed and new life in the womb is welcomed.

So we find ourselves asking how life in the womb is not welcomed. We ask, too, how that human being in the womb has no legal status. We desire for it to be legally recognized, but because of our unjust laws, that life is in essence illegal. The border of the womb becomes a wall, a dividing line between recognized human dignity and no legal status. How is it that our cultural values can accept such double-mindedness? How can the side of a border that one falls upon determine one’s dignity? Partial-birth abortion seems to be the ultimate example of the double-mindedness we exercise regarding the border of the womb, as the child on the fence is destroyed so close to acquiring the legal status of being fully birthed.

Returning to the story from Genesis we can take note that both the strangers and, Isaac, the one in the womb, are welcomed. Today our culture welcomes neither the stranger nor the one in the womb. Thus, we are more consistent than we realize.

Under our law the unborn have no legal status to claim a right to cross the border of the womb if the mother chooses (at the prompting of our culture and often directly from family) against this life. The dignity of the child is not a factor. So also with the immigrant strangers: their human dignity creates no legal claim to cross the border to support life. The way our society treats the border of the womb and the political borders separating nations diminishes our sense of the value of human life and dignity. We have no choice, as Catholics, but to stand up in its defense.

Should we be surprised that the stranger is not welcomed if our very own offspring (25%) are rejected? Should we be surprised that our own offspring are not welcomed when the stranger is rejected? Is not the present presumption that natural conception of new life be obstructed through contraception of some sort as the “responsible” action? So also is not the present presumption that the immigrant has no claim whatsoever to live in our midst unless our civil law grants it? Our “choice” seems to trump their dignity. Our culture is quite consistent in making us the arbiters of life.

From the book of revelation we receive an invitation to take on the virtue of hospitality. The message to the angel of the church in Laodicea, a lukewarm place that considers itself rich and affluent, is first a chastisement but then also includes an invitation to open the heart: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me. I will give the victor the right to sit with me on my throne, as I myself first won the victory and sit with my Father on his throne” [Rev 3:20-21].

## A Catholic Perspective on Creation and Evolution in the Bible

# No Conflict Between Revelation and the Science of Evolution

By  
Rev. Ronald Ketteler



Rev. Ronald Ketteler

The image of God in the Bible proclaimed in the Shema—"Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord" (Dt 6:4)—lies at the heart of biblical covenantal love. This ancient credo declares the uniqueness and oneness of the God of Israel. It is the verse quoted by Jesus in identifying the first and greatest commandment. (Mk. 12: 28-30; Mt, 22:36-37)

In his inaugural encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* ("God is Love," 2005), Pope Benedict XVI conceives the image of God rooted in the Shema as a reflection of the doctrine of creation. That foundational confession of faith discloses the God of revelation as "the one true God himself who is the source of all that exists" and through whom "the whole world comes into existence by the power of his creative Word." (DCE n. 9)

The Pope then draws two basic insights from that revealed mystery: 1) creation is "dear to him [God], for it was willed by him and 'made' by him," and 2) the God of biblical revelation "loves man."

From his earlier writings as a theologian, one work of Pope Benedict XVI is especially instructive for understanding the doctrine of creation in relation to modern science. 'In the Beginning ...' A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall (1985), a series of Lenten homilies, included three homilies on creation theology. Those chapters construct an engaging biblical theology drawn from the exegesis of the creation narratives from the opening chapters in the Book of Genesis.

As part of that overview, 'In the Beginning ...' analyzed the theological question of creation and evolution by setting forth several working assumptions for interpreting the biblical meaning of the Genesis texts.

First, since the science of evolution and the biblical accounts speak to distinct realities, the relationship between evolution and creation does not become an "either / or" matter. From this perspective, the science of evolutionary biology cannot be judged to be inherently incompatible with the doctrine of creation. Consequently, the relationship between science and faith on this question can be more accurately phrased as "creation and evolution," not "creation vs. evolution."

The creation narratives in the Bible "represent another way of speaking of reality than that with which we are familiar from physics and biology." Thus, the biblical language of the "dust of the earth and the breath of God ... does not in fact explain how human persons come to be but rather what they are." The scientific methodology of evolutionary biology and the theology of creation encompass "two complementary –

rather than mutually exclusive realities."

Secondly, Pope Benedict XVI has consistently rejected evolutionary materialism, a theory that posits blind chance as an all-encompassing explanation of the origin of human life. Against such evolutionary materialism, he affirmed that "the great projects of the living creation point to a creating Reason, and show us a creating Intelligence..." Thus, he argued that "[h]uman beings are not a mistake but something willed; they are the fruit of love."

The Christian doctrine of creation declares that "[t]he universe is not the product of darkness and unreason. It comes from intelligence, freedom, and from the beauty that is identical with love. Seeing this gives us the courage to keep on living, and it empowers us, comforted thereby, to take upon ourselves the adventure of life."

Nonetheless, the disciplines of physics and biology and the other natural sciences can provide "a new and unheard-of creation account with vast new images, which let us recognize the face of the Creator and which make us realize once again that at the very beginning and foundation of all being there is a creating Intelligence."

As the Holy Father would point out later in "The Truth of Christianity?" (1999), Christian belief and practice affirm the unity of love and reason which subsist together as 'the two pillars of reality: true reason is love, and love is true reason.' The unity of reason and love undergirds the authentic foundation and meaning of all reality.

In his treatise on the theology of creation, Pope Benedict XVI noted that "the Bible is not a natural science textbook, nor does it intend to be such." Therefore, there is a need for distinguishing "between the form of portrayal and the content that is portrayed" in Sacred Scripture. The images or ways of describing reality [the content portrayed] are not the reality itself. The Holy Father concluded: "... only the reality that shines through these images would be what was intended and what was truly enduring."

'In the Beginning...' reflected and continues to reflect mainstream contemporary Catholic thought which recognizes the discoveries of modern science on the origin of the universe within the framework of the theology of creation. In principle, there is no conflict between revelation and the science of evolution.

In the 1980s, The Church's Confession of Faith had articulated the limits of theology in these matters. An adult catechism published in 1985 by the German Bishops' Conference, the CCF explained that "the Bible uses modes of expression and representation dependent on the world picture of its time; these are not binding on us. The Bible does not wish to instruct us on the empirically knowable genesis of the world or of the different species of organisms. It wishes to stress that God is the Creator of the world and its salvation...."

In this regard, the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) lays down several key principles for an appropriate

# Dialogue: Care-filled Listening

By Michelle Herberger  
Opportunities for Life Program Director

The topic of dialogue surfaced recently at two Catholic Conference of Kentucky committee meetings. Dialogue contrasts sharply in a culture where partisanship is often intense and dialogue frequently nonexistent.

In *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the bishops of the United States provide us guidance to help form responses to the complex issues we face in our nation. They call us to reflect on Catholic social teaching as we consider how our faith can inform our choices. In our deliberations, our differences are often a matter of emphasis regarding one aspect or another related to a particular teaching. And we generally hold on to our position with passion. Rather than trying to temper that energy, perhaps we can use it to understand one another and our social teaching more fully. God often speaks to us through that for which we are passionate.

How then, can we come together to discover and promote that which we hold in common, rather than our differences? To do this, the bishops invite us to listen openly to one another.

This is an invitation to become *preoccupied with dialogue* as an act of care rather than competition. Henri Nouwen in *Our Greatest Gift*, writes, "To care well...we must trust deeply that people are loved as much as we are, and we must make that love visible by our presence" (p.103). "Care," writes Nouwen, "is the loving attention given to another person... because that person is a child of God, just as we are" (p. 58). Our faith speaks to this, but do we dare believe it?

There is a risk to this kind of caring. It requires trust. We trust that when we come together in dialogue, we come in

respectful mutuality. We let go of self-protectiveness and relinquish certitude in order to discover something deeper, something new.

Care is expressed through listening. In *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together*, William Isaacs writes, "The heart of dialogue is the simple but profound capacity to listen. Listening requires we not only hear the words, but also embrace, accept, and gradually let go of our own inner clamoring. It gives us a way to perceive more directly the ways we participate in the world." (p.83) Dialogue leads to understanding. We come to a deeper understanding of the other and of ourselves. This process uncovers the real issues.

For Catholics, one such real issue is the sanctity of human life from birth to natural death. Because we live in a society that supports abortion on demand, capital punishment, and a health care system that is not working, we have sometimes viewed ourselves in opposition when working on one or another of these important issues. Dialogue about our common belief in the sanctity of human life and the rights derived therefrom could lead us to see how our work varies in emphasis, but not in the overall desire to promote respect for and provide protection to all who share a right to life, whether in the womb, in a hospital bed or in a cell on death row.

If we truly believe that God is present in us and speaks in and through each of us, then clearly now is the time to create a safe space for dialogue to occur. We have nothing to lose except our own arrogance of certainty and everything to gain as we listen to each other. By engaging in a process built on trust and acceptance, God leads us to discover His wisdom, renews His life in us, and sends us forth to carry out our common mission to be His servants.

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## No Conflict Between Revelation and the Science of Evolution

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exegesis of Sacred Scripture.

First, in affirming the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God, the Catechism upholds the truth of Sacred Scripture and its inerrancy in terms of "saving truth." It adopts a critical passage from the *Dei Verbum*, the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: "... we must acknowledge that the books of scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures (DV n.11)." (CCC n. 107) "Saving truth" is normative and binding; the time-conditioned cultural expressions of the biblical meaning are not.

Secondly, insofar as the Bible is the Word of God in human words, readers "must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words." (CCC n. 109)

Thirdly, identification of the intention of the sacred authors must "take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes

of feeling, speaking and narrating then current." (CCC n.110)

The Catechism confirms this position by again quoting directly from *Dei Verbum*: "For the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression." (DV n.12)

Accordingly, the U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults (2006) sums up two polar positions which are not in accord with the Catholic understanding of creation and evolution: "on the one hand, by 'creationist' or fundamentalist biblical positions that do not take into account the literary forms of the Bible and the primary theological purpose of its teaching, and, on the other hand, by the use of theories of evolution to support a materialist and anti-religious interpretation of the world and humanity." [USCCA, 61]

The USCCA concludes: "The Bible is not a scientific textbook and should never be read as such; rather it reveals what God wants us to know for the sake of our salvation."

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## Poverty and Policy Options for Kentucky

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one such opportunity.

But going forward high school completion is not enough as more and more jobs require training offered by two- and four-year college programs, and here a rededication to need-based financial aid will be the key to reducing structural inequality in the Commonwealth.

If poverty creeps up to the midcourt working years then the best defense that offers a helping hand, and not a humiliating handout, is one that supports low-wage work and volatile incomes. Several changes to the safety net can be made here to improve the lives of the working poor. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is a refundable tax credit to low-income workers, is widely viewed as the most effective anti-poverty government program for working families, and twenty-three states have adopted an EITC to be used to offset state income tax liabilities. In a policy brief written last year, Erica Meade and I estimated that over 360,000 working Kentuckians could be assisted if the state adopted an EITC. Indeed, there were three versions of a state EITC in this past legislative session, one of which had broad support from faith, youth, veteran, poverty advocates and Kentucky business leaders, but the sour budgetary cycle inhibited passage. This is clearly a positive policy that merits further consideration in the Legislature. Another policy that merits consideration is child care subsidies for the working poor. Ideally a new Pre-K program in Kentucky will start at least by age 3, but to cover those ages before and after Pre-K, and for those hours when the children are not in school, supporting work by subsidizing child care has been shown to be cost effective. In a recent analysis for Kentucky Youth Advocates, I along with Charles Hokayem and Bradley Hardy estimated that holding all else equal a 25 percent subsidy on the hourly cost of child care would raise employment among single mothers in Kentucky by 3 to 5 percentage points, or to levels comparable to that found among single mothers in rest of the nation.

Other reforms for the working poor include expanding eli-

gibility for unemployment insurance, simplifying the renewal process for food stamps among working recipients, and covering the uninsured. At present unemployment insurance is not available to short-term workers, which puts an undue burden on workers in seasonal industries, especially those located in our rural areas. In addition, those workers who receive assistance through the Food Stamp Program are required to recertify for benefits on a periodic basis, which often requires missing work because of limited office hours at the welfare agency. Nationally there is some evidence that this process inhibits people from remaining on the program even though they are eligible. This is particularly problematic in this period of rising food and energy costs. Several states are experimenting with various online renewal processes that can be accessed at any time, and this is a policy arena ripe for innovation in Kentucky. Last, covering the uninsured is the largest financial challenge facing the Commonwealth, and probably cannot be tackled properly without federal involvement. Nonetheless, at a minimum Kentucky should re-examine its Medicaid and KCHIP programs to improve programmatic outreach to those currently eligible for benefits. A more ambitious agenda would involve restructuring the health-care market in general, and the impetus for reform may emanate from Washington depending on who prevails in the presidential election this fall.

Both economic reality and Catholic teaching compel us to examine closely whether our current economic policies ensure equality of opportunity for all, and with a particular eye toward the less fortunate. Many Kentuckians were awakened to the economic plight of the poor after they watched with mouths agape at the devastation wreaked upon the Gulf Coast by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This is an opportune time for the Commonwealth and nation to recommit itself to combating poverty.

Failing to act upon one of the greatest challenges facing our state will mean that the pain of persistent poverty will endure. This is a fate we cannot accept.



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