

## *Pope Benedict XVI Appoints Rev. William F. Medley as the Fourth Bishop of the Diocese of Owensboro*

Father William Francis Medley, a pastor from the Archdiocese of Louisville, has been appointed as the fourth Bishop of Owensboro, Ky. He succeeds Bishop John J. McRaith who resigned January 5, 2009 after 27 years as the shepherd of the Owensboro Diocese.

"As a native Kentuckian, my own faith has been shaped by the practice of Catholicism in this commonwealth since pioneer days. It is now a privilege to be the shepherd and servant of others molded in this holy and rich tradition," said Bishop Medley.

Louisville Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz consecrated Bishop Medley on Feb. 10, 2010, during a Mass celebrated at the Owensboro Sportscenter. Retired Louisville Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., and retired Owensboro Bishop John McRaith were co-consecrators at the ceremony. The event took place in the presence of several other bishops, priests from Owensboro and other Kentucky dioceses, family members, friends and parishioners of Owensboro's parishes.

Founded in 1937, the Diocese of Owensboro extends through 32 counties in Western Kentucky. With 51,780 Catholics, the diocese hosts 79 parishes, 19 schools, including one university, and one hospital. It is part of the same province that includes all the dioceses of Kentucky and Tennessee, including Nashville.

Bishop Medley was born on Sept 17, 1952 in Marion County, Ky. to Dorothy C. Hayden Medley and the late James Werner Medley. He was baptized at St. Francis of Assisi Church, St. Francis, Kentucky and attended elementary school there. After attending St. Thomas Seminary High School, Bishop Medley received a bachelor of arts in philosophy and psychology from Bellarmine University in Louisville and a master of divinity from Saint Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad, Ind.

Before his ordination in 1982, Bishop Medley served as a social worker for the Kentucky Department of Human Resources from 1974 to 1978.



Most Reverend William F. Medley

Bishop Medley was ordained to the priesthood on May 22, 1982, at the Cathedral of the Assumption by Archbishop Thomas C. Kelly, O.P., Archbishop Emeritus of Louisville. After ordination Medley became associate pastor at St. Pius X Parish in Louisville from 1982-1985 while serving as chaplain at Assumption High School. In June 1985 he was assigned as associate pastor at the Cathedral of the Assumption, Louisville, where he served until 1988.

In June of 1988, he was assigned as administrator of Saint Benedict Parish, St Charles Borromeo Parish and Holy Cross Parish, Louisville, and in 1989, Bishop Medley was appointed director of the Office of Clergy Personnel. In 1990 he became the establishing pastor of St. Martin de Porres Parish, which was formed through the merger of the former parishes of St Charles Borromeo, St. Benedict, and Holy Cross.

In September 1993, Bishop Medley was appointed pastor of St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral in Bardstown,

Ky., the original See of the Archdiocese of Louisville. During his tenure at St. Joseph, the church was designated a minor Basilica. During this time, he also served as the administrator of St. Monica Parish in Bardstown.

In June 2005 Bishop Medley was appointed pastor of Mother of Good Counsel Parish in Louisville, and in 2007 he became pastor of Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish in Goshen, Ky. He also served as pastor of St. Bernadette Parish, which was created when those two parishes merged, and oversaw the construction of a new school.

Bishop Medley has served in a variety of positions in the Louisville Archdiocese, including on the College of Consultors, the Priests' Council, the Planning Commission of the Archdiocese, the Priests' Health Panel, and Priests' Personnel Board.

He also has served as president of the Bardstown/ Nelson County Ministerial Association and on the Nelson County Human Rights Commission.

**WITNESS** thanks Mel Howard, Editor, *Western Kentucky Catholic*, for use of this article; and Pat Pfister for the photograph of Bishop Medley.

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# From Conception until Natural Death... ...and Everywhere in Between

By Robert J. Castagna  
Executive Director



In a 2010 legislative session confronting an estimated \$1.5 billion revenue shortfall for the 2010-12 biennium, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky is addressing issues spanning the Church's concerns from conception until natural death and everywhere in between.

Advocating for the common good for all Kentuckians, the Conference staff finds itself in conversations and legislative deliberations concerning life and death, taxes, economic justice, nonpublic school transportation funding and maintaining the safety net of public services to protect poor and vulnerable people in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

### The Sanctity of Human Life The Dignity of the Human Person

Addressing life and death issues, the Conference has testified in support of SB 38 requiring an ultrasound exam and in-person informed consent before an abortion may be performed. Having passed this bill in the Senate in recent years, the Conference seeks passage by the House of Representatives and the Governor's signature for the bill to become law.

The Conference supports HB 45 abolishing the death penalty. The Conference also endorses HB 16 to prevent the severely mentally ill from being executed. In view of the state's unprecedented revenue shortfall, the Conference suggests that the state study the costs associated with implementing the death penalty as has been done in other states.

In another criminal justice issue, the Conference continues its long-standing support for HB 70 providing for the restoration of voting rights for those who have completed their prison sentences. Kentucky and Virginia are the only two states not providing for automatic restoration of voting rights for those who have paid their debt to society.

Reflecting upon Catholic social teaching, papal statements and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Conference has submitted testimony to the Department of Justice and Public Safety Cabinet objecting to the continued use of the death penalty and commenting on proposed new administrative

rules providing procedures and protocols for executions by lethal injection and electrocution. The Conference has requested that Kentucky recognize the religious or ethical beliefs of state employees who object in conscience to participating in an execution.

### Economic Justice

Seeking to advance economic justice in tax policies, the Conference supports tax reform and a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to achieve a more progressive tax system. Such progressivity would correct the current situation where lower income taxpayers pay a higher percentage of income in taxes than those in the top income brackets. A refundable Kentucky EITC would benefit the working poor and lift families out of poverty. Currently 23 states and the District of Columbia supplement the federal EITC with a state EITC. The Center for Poverty Research at the University of Kentucky estimates that a state EITC could benefit more than 360,000 working poor in families residing in the fifth poorest state in the nation.

A major economic justice issue of national and statewide concern is the absence of a rate cap on payday loans. The Conference is an active member in the Kentucky Coalition for Responsible Lending seeking a 36% rate cap for payday loans in Kentucky so that families do not get caught in the debt trap sprung by repeated loans. Nationally customers take out an average of nine loans per year; and it is estimated that Kentuckians lost \$158 million in payday loan fees in 2008. The industry charges interest rates between 391 and 459% APR for short term loans. Fifteen states and the District of Columbia either ban or limit the interest on payday loans. In 2007, the Federal Government limited the payday loan interest rate that could be charged military families to 36% as a matter of national security. A 36% rate cap on payday loans is a matter of state economic security for Kentuckians.

### Nonpublic School Transportation Funding

Seeking the common good for all in society, the Conference supports the rights of parents to choose the educational setting they deem best for their children. Parents choosing to send their children to private schools avail themselves of those rights. As a

# *Inclusion: Living Our Catholic Identity*

By Bill Farnau

Our Catholic faith has always been inclusive. Throughout history, the Catholic Church has been an advocate for the disenfranchised, the unborn, and the marginalized in society. Therefore, it stands to reason that our parishes and schools reflect an inclusion model. We are trying. As a church community, strides are being made each day to address those special needs found in our schools and parishes. Whether children, youth or adults, Christ calls all of us to be responsive to the needs of those we serve. Data, gathered recently, can tell us more about the challenges we face.



In 2001, the Diocese of Salt Lake City conducted a survey seeking to discover why parents sent children to Catholic schools in the diocese. A portion of that study included results from families who were not sending their Catholic children to Catholic schools. Of those families surveyed, the following reasons were given:

- Sixty percent (60%) of those with children in religious education classes indicated that finances were the main reason they did not send their children to Catholic schools.
- Forty one percent (41%) of parents whose children did not attend Catholic schools made the decision because of class size, indicating classes were too large.
- Twenty one percent (21%) indicated that they were not sending their children to Catholic schools because the special needs of their children could be better met in another setting.

The data gathered in Salt Lake may possibly be transferred to your diocese. We need to make sure that we are not turning away children from our schools or our religious education programs because other options are seen as superior.

The Diocese of Lexington has been working through an

Bill Farnau is Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Lexington.

Inclusion Committee to develop a strategic plan for addressing the special needs found in Catholic Schools and religious education programs in our parishes. As a part of that effort, teachers were surveyed in the fall of 2009 regarding the students that they are currently serving in diocesan Catholic schools.

Although different interpretations were made by some teachers, it was obvious that there are significant numbers of children with special needs currently in our schools. Among the largest group of students identified, were students that exhibit symptoms of attention deficit disorder (ADD & ADHD) and speech disorders. It was also noted that there are many students, functioning two or more years above grade level, who would benefit from an assessment to confirm giftedness. Since we are currently serving children with special needs, it is important that we do it well and continue to expand our knowledge and influence in this area.

Obviously there is more work ahead of us as we address issues of inclusion. Signs of positive improvement include:

- Compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) in our parishes and schools is important. Inclusion of ramps and elevators reflects a concern for those who have mobility issues. Facility planning includes ADA compliance.
- Cooperative attitudes and understanding of inclusion issues are demonstrated by those in leadership positions in the parish and school. Inclusion training and professional development activities are reflected in an effort to be more inclusive.
- Children with special needs are welcomed into Catholic Schools. Where there are enrollment restrictions, there is evidence that training and effort are in place to remove those restrictions.

Although the task to enhance our inclusion involves time, money and energy, addressing the special needs of everyone in our school and parish communities must occupy a position of high priority in our future planning.

## **March for Life 2010, A Report From Covington**

By Kathleen Kiely

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the nation's capital on Friday, January 22, to mark the 37th anniversary of Roe v. Wade and protest abortion in the annual March for Life. Gathering from all over the country, protesters of all ages first heard from prominent pro-life political and religious leaders before beginning the march.

Fourteen busloads of pilgrims — over 750 representatives of the Diocese of Covington's Pro-Life Commission and Catholic youth and chaperones from schools and parishes in the diocese traveled to Washington, D.C. where they joined 300,000 other marchers. Bishop Roger Foys led the diocesan delegation.

This year is important for the pro-life movement. As Congress negotiates a final health care bill, Catholics from across the country are urging their representatives and senators to keep

longstanding restrictions against federal funding of abortion and full conscience protection in the legislation.

As long-time advocates of health care reform, the U.S. Catholic bishops continue to make the moral case that genuine health care reform must protect the life, dignity, consciences and health of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. Health care reform should not advance a pro-abortion agenda in our country. Marchers hoped the leaders of our nation have a change of heart when voting on health care reform.

When our Northern Kentucky youth arrived in D.C., they celebrated Mass together with Bishop Foys at St. Dominic's parish. Bishop Foys expressed delight at the opportunity to celebrate with the students. After Mass, the March for Life began on the Congressional Mall and proceeded past the U. S. Capitol to the

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# Cultivate Peace by Protecting Creation

By Rev. John Rausch

In 2004 Wangari Maathai won the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Green Belt Movement in Kenya that paid poor women to plant over 30 million tree seedlings in their communities. Some critics objected that honoring an environmentalist distracted from traditional peace work. Maathai believed that the problems of war, environmental degradation, poverty and the low status of women are all intertwined.

Benedict XVI recognizes these same connections in his 2010 World Day of Peace Message, "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation." In his emphatic words: "The protection of creation and peacemaking are profoundly linked!" (par. #14).

His message reminds us that a covenant exists between humanity and the environment, that we are creation's stewards and we have a responsibility especially towards the poor and future generations: "...seeing creation as God's gift to humanity helps us understand our vocation and worth as human beings" (par. #2). This implies that humanity cannot stand indifferent to climate change, desertification, the loss of productivity in agricultural areas, the pollution of rivers and the loss of biodiversity.

The pontiff advocates a model of development based on the centrality of the human person, on the promotion of the common good, on responsibility and on prudence, "the virtue that tells us what needs to be done today in view of what might happen tomorrow" (par. #9).

Yet, one aspect about care of creation personally indicts most Catholics in America: lifestyle. No fewer than five times Benedict XVI encourages "more sober lifestyles" or "a changed lifestyle" (par. #9), a lifestyle "marked by sobriety and solidarity" (par. #5), and a challenge "to examine our lifestyle and the prevailing models of consumption and production" to bring about "new lifestyles" (par. #11). We in the

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## March for Life 2010, A Report From Covington

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front of the Supreme Court steps. The March is non-confrontational and prayerful, a real demonstration of freedom of speech in our democracy.

Bishop Foy's is an amazing role model for our diocese when it comes to life issues. He always speaks passionately about the sanctity of human life and respect for all life from conception to natural death. His presence encourages everyone, especially the youth. He instills in them the message that they can have an impact in reversing the Roe vs. Wade decision in the future.

The hundreds of thousands of youth marching continue to be inspiring. A generation that has witnessed nothing but the Culture of Death now marches to a different drummer; one of truth and hope.

In his homily at St. Dominic's in Washington, D.C., Bishop Foy's preached, "We must let others know we are Pro-life, but in

Kathleen Kiely is Director of the Pro-Life Commission, Covington

church once practiced a greater asceticism of abstinence and self-denial, sacrifice and fasting. Now we accept the comfort and convenience offered by the Golden Calf of free market economics.

We in the United States represent 4.5 percent of the world's population, but each year we guzzle 42 percent of the world's gasoline, use 33 percent of its electricity and consume 25 percent of its manufactured goods. A change in lifestyle does not mean living in a cave eating twigs and berries, but it does mean cultivating a spirituality of solidarity with the rest of humanity.

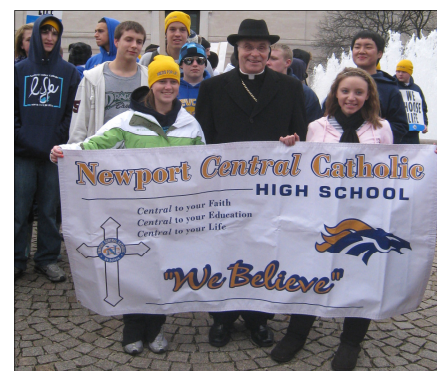
Consumer choices must reflect the common good. McMansions, gas-guzzlers and elitist consumption, by using scarce resources for the few, beggar our neighbors. Resources that could build public goods to enhance the lives of many get channeled to meet the wants of the wealthy. A spirituality of solidarity affirms values of simplicity, modesty and sharing.

"Every economic decision has a moral consequence" (par. #7), writes Benedict XVI. He encourages considering the full cost of using a natural resource, the environmental and social costs besides the overall expenses incurred. In this light using certain fossil fuels for energy comes at an exorbitant price. Burning coal, which generates 90 percent of Kentucky's energy, emits particle pollution linked to health problems including respiratory illnesses, heart attacks and brain damage. Additionally, the practice of mountaintop removal used to mine much of the coal wreaks havoc on the environment and nearby communities. By reducing our energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency and developing renewable sources, we can move away from coal to create a new jobs in green technologies. That's solidarity with the earth and the next generation.

Benedict XVI's Peace Day Message reminds us we were put in the garden "to cultivate and care for it" (Gen. 2:15). Done correctly, our work can bring peace and save the earth.

charity. Because when we live in charity, we live in truth and love.

The message is clear: elderly, young or in between, the tide is turning. A new Culture of Life is taking hold in the United States. Even if the mainstream media does not give the March for Life equal airtime or newspaper coverage, the marchers who keep coming back year after year will win this fight.



Bishop Roger Foy's with students from the diocese of Covington who attended the 2010 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

# What Should Be in Kentucky's Energy Future?



Sr. Mary Schmuck

By Sister Mary Schmuck, R.S.M.

Stepped up reporting on Congressional action on energy policy as well as all the December 2009 focus on the Copenhagen international climate change treaty conference spur ongoing reflection about Kentucky's energy future.

Energy is a big matter for Kentucky. A lot of coal is underground in this Commonwealth. Its mining, transport and use result in a lot of businesses providing a lot of jobs, and Kentuckians – businesses and

households - having low electricity rates. All this is good news.

The bad news: this fuel source is very polluting whether or not one believes it is a factor in speeding up climate change and its consequences. Further bad news: nuclear power poses a major waste management problem.

We are blessed with the wisdom of Catholic Social Teaching. It is a gift in sorting through this multi-sided issue and its policy options. Pope Benedict XVI's 2010 World Day of Peace message is his most comprehensive teaching to date on environmental concerns, capping his repeated calls for stronger environmental protection.

(Visit the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change website to read the Holy Father's World Day of Peace message: <http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/index.html>.)

His root message: the world is a gift of God and we humans have an obligation to care for cultivating it as a matter of justice for people across Earth and for future generations.

With this wisdom in mind, we have Kentucky's government carefully studying this matter. Dr Len Peters, Kentucky Energy & Environment Cabinet Secretary, heads a task force with this focus. Dr Peters has a strong background in nuclear matters. Thus he looks with some favor on nuclear power possibilities for Kentucky.

It is good news that he and a 22-member task group are working toward the goals of many new clean jobs that protect the environment and meet our energy needs. Specific task group goals include:

- Energy efficiencies toward 18% reduction in KY emissions by 2025;
- Finding ways toward cleaner coal;
- Tenfold expanded development/use of biofuels; and
- Recognition of the continuing need to use coal and keeping coal jobs.

Of note: no mention is made of solar or wind as possible alternative energy sources, granted their current small but growing scale. Also of interest – no mention is made of the "full cost" of

Natural resources should be used in such a way that immediate benefits do not have a negative impact on living creatures, human and not, present and future....

Pope Benedict XVI  
World Day of Peace  
January 1, 2010

all transportation needs involved in biofuel alternatives under current Kentucky consideration.

As for nuclear power, with Pope Benedict's teaching in mind: how can we ignore the moral question about our right to leave such very toxic waste for future generations just so our current energy needs can be met? Won't any "new generation of nuclear power" still have the major waste disposal problem once plants are decommissioned even if their life spans increase from forty to a hundred or more years. What is the real viability of "perpetual reprocessing" of nuclear fuel? What to do while we wait 12-18 years to get any nuclear power plant up and working? Is all the mining and transport of uranium and plant construction cost free – or are we again externalizing its costs to others including future generations?

A new report written by the Ochs Center notes that if resources are focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy, thousands of clean energy jobs could be created in the commonwealth. Isn't this a better investment than spending hundreds of millions of dollars for any coal-fired or nuclear power plant? Green jobs can't be outsourced overseas and they keep helping our local people conserve electricity. Cf: [ww.kftc.org/stopsmith](http://ww.kftc.org/stopsmith)

We have a challenge before us, Kentucky. We are blessed with many resources including moral wisdom for responding to this big challenge! It is a lot about Kentucky public policy priorities.

**Preservation of the environment, promotion of sustainable development and particular attention to climate change are matters of grave concern for the entire human family. No nation or business sector can ignore the ethical implications present in all economic and social development. With increasing clarity scientific research demonstrates that the impact of human actions in any one place or region can have worldwide effects.**

— Pope Benedict XVI  
September 1, 2007

**In a word, concern for the environment calls for a broad global vision of the world; a responsible common effort to move beyond approaches based on selfish nationalistic interests towards a vision constantly open to the needs of all peoples. We cannot remain indifferent to what is happening around us, for the deterioration of any one part of the planet affects us all.**

— Pope Benedict XVI  
World Day of Peace  
January 1, 2010

# Nobody Knows Where We Are Going, If We Don't Know Where We Come From

By Jose Neil Donis

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Prize winner, spoke these words during his visit to Louisville in 2000: "If we want to know where we are going, we have to understand where we are coming from." These words call my attention now, as I write about Hispanic Catholics in the history of the United States and look to the future of the Latino community and the future of the church in the U.S.

Let's talk about history, specifically where we Catholics come from so we know where we are going. The life and growth of the Catholic Church in the United States has always been bound to immigration. Before, the majority of immigrants were Europeans. Today, Latin Americans are a large percentage. However, the question is, 'Is immigration to the United States the key to the Catholic Church's growth?'

Hispanics have been present since the church's beginnings in the United States. The following are some dates and historic events showing the presence of Hispanic Catholics in American history and before.

The Puerto Rican governor, Juan Ponce de Leon, arrived in Florida in 1513 when poinsettias still flourished, and therefore baptized the state with that name. The first Mass or Christian rite was celebrated there by the Spanish.

The first colonies were founded in 1769 by Spaniards in Santa Fe New Mexico in 1609, and in San Diego California. This happened before the start of the Protestant Reformation in Europe.

In what is now Saint Augustine, Florida, the first mission, Nombre de Dios, was erected in 1565. This was the beginning of a great number of Catholic missions founded by Spanish Catholic priests in the southeast, midwest and western portions of the United States.

In the English colonies, Catholicism was established in Maryland in 1634. Notably, at the time of America's independence, the percentage of Catholics was less than 2% of the population: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholicism\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_the_United_States).

Just a few years ago, Hispanics were less than 1% of Kentucky's population. However since then, we have been the community with the fastest growth in the state.

During the Mexican-American War, from 1846 to 1848, the Mexican territories of California, Nevada and Utah, along with portions of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming, became part of the United States, and with it the thousands of Hispanic and Mexican colonists who were already living there in that time. As a result of this event, we have a saying that goes "we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us."

## Multiculturalism

The Catholic Church has been influenced by many cultures in this country. Historically, the Church has made an effort to adapt to the new cultures entering the community, just as they do today. For example, by offering religious services in native languages, or adopting certain traditions, such as Quinceañeras in the Hispanic culture, the church has reached out to countless immigrants.

Some churches were built by immigrants. A good example is the Cathedral of San Raphael in Dubuque, Iowa, which was initiated by German and Irish immigrants. Immigrants also bring new life to older parishes as has happened St. Joseph Catholic Church in Butchertown, near downtown Louisville.



Jose Neil Donis

For Hispanic Catholics, church not only implies religion but a very cultural tradition. We know that many Catholic religious traditions have slowly made their way north from Latin America. Today we see the celebration of Quinceañeras as something normal in the community. The celebration of Our Lady of Guadalupe still generates headlines by calling the attention of the locals and underlying the great devotion showed by Hispanic Catholics on that feast day. Slowly other traditions like Posadas, Holy Week sawdust made carpets or the live Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) are becoming more common as well.

## In Numbers

The Catholic Church has more than 30,000 diocesan priests, and 15,000 priests from different orders. More than 30,000 ministers, 13,000 deacons, 75,000 sisters and 5,600 brothers also make up the Church. In addition, there are 150,000 teachers in Catholic schools teaching more than 2.7 million students. There are 146 Latin dioceses in the Catholic Church in the United States.

From being less than 2% of the population during colonial times, Catholicism became the largest Christian denomination in the country with 68 million (2009 Kenedy Directory), one of the largest Roman Catholic populations in the world.

In the United States, Catholics represent 26% of all Christians, and the biggest rate of growth is due to the Latinos. And many undocumented immigrants are not yet registered in parishes.

During the last 50 to 60 years, the transformation the Church has experienced has been great and presents many challenges. For example, the growth of the Latin population and the prediction that Latinos will be the largest minority in the short future has influenced many seminaries to require their students to learn Spanish.

In his notes about "The Situation of the Catholic Church at the beginning of 2006", Father John McCloskey says the future of the Catholic Church will depend upon how the growing Hispanic immigrant population is treated, and if they are accepted and integrated into the Church or not. Not recognizing them as the fastest growing Catholic community in the church will also play a role in the Church's future. The United States is a major influence in the global church, and the Hispanic church needs to be prepared.

From my personal experience as an immigrant, I have to say that when I think of Catholics, in some way I think of a "brotherhood" that unites all of us as members of one church with the same beliefs and traditions. Maybe that is why the church is the place that many immigrants seek first when we arrive. We are looking for help or just seeking a place where we won't feel rejected by the cultural challenges of the local community. Maybe this feeling of trust in the Catholic "brotherhood" is what makes us look to the church first. I suppose this explains the population growth surrounding Catholic churches like Saint Rita in South Louisville or Annunciation in Shelbyville. I wonder, though, if this happens in all the places where immigrants arrive? Maybe not. On more than one occasion, I have heard about immigrants feeling rejected by the non-immigrant parishioners within their new churches. If we expect to keep growing as a church, it is necessary to make room for the immigrants and strangers seeking help or a place they can feel welcome.

If we don't understand that since the beginning we were already one church, we will face many challenges, divisions and problems in the future. To be able to continue growing and making progress, we have to accept that we are not a Hispanic church, an Anglo church, a Mexican, German, or Asian church. Together, we are one Catholic Church.

## The Joint Declaration on Justification — A Decade Later

By Rev. Ronald Ketteler

The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification was signed by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Vatican on October 31, 1999. The World Methodist Council later affirmed the declaration in 2006.

The key doctrinal passage in the Joint Declaration reads: "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works." (JD n15)

The Joint Declaration marks an overarching ecumenical breakthrough since "justification by faith" was the central burning issue which divided the Western church at the Reformation, the article of faith upon which "the church stands or falls."

The LWF had declared in 1998 that the Lutheran condemnations of the 16th century were no longer relevant in application to current Roman Catholic doctrinal teaching on justification.

The Joint Declaration represents the remarkable fruits of the bilateral Catholic-Lutheran dialogues, nationally and internationally. As Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) acknowledges, ecumenical dialogue has been making "surprising discoveries possible (UUS n. 38)"

By contrast, Reformation and Counter-Reformation polemics had fomented conditions where "intolerant polemics and controversies have made incompatible assertions out of what was really the result of two different ways of looking at the same reality (UUS n. 38)."

The late Pope John Paul II had supported and encouraged that ecumenical dialogue on justification with the LWF with the hope that consensus on this foundational doctrine would inspire the ecumenical movement at large as Jubilee Year 2000 approached.

Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy was the president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) during the years of preparation of the Joint Declaration. In *Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue* (2005), he discusses the three phases of dialogue between the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church through the lens of the process of the development and approval of The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Cardinal Cassidy considers the Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification "a milestone on the way to the restoration of full, visible unity among the disciples of the one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Even though several unresolved doctrinal questions were raised by the official Catholic response, a consensus "on the basic truths of the doctrine of justification" has been established.

Cardinal Walter Kasper, the current president of the PCPCU, states that the Joint Declaration is an achievement of "a consensus on some basic truths (not the basic truths) of



Rev. Ronald Ketteler

the doctrine of justification."

In "Current Problems in Ecumenical Theology" (2003), Cardinal Kasper judges that "the churches do not have to agree point by point on all theological issues." Hence, given a substantial agreement, "differences are not necessarily church divisive" for "a reconciled diversity, or whatever we name it, is sufficient"

Cardinal Kasper emphasizes that "[t]he actual 'inner core' which remains ... is the question of the Church and its inherent question of the ministry." Ecumenical dialogues are currently engaged with these issues.

In *That They All May Be One* (2004), Cardinal Kasper writes that the Joint Declaration symbolizes progress in ecumenical rapprochement, a process that is "laborious and needs patience and a great deal of staying power." In effect, it witnesses to the possibility of progress and in doing so "can give us new ecumenical confidence and momentum."

In a word, the ecumenical dialogues have enabled separated Christians to discover their "already existing communion in Jesus Christ, which is real and deep even if not yet full" In particular, The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification has "enlarged and deepened this communion."

On October 1, 2009 in Chicago, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta, delivered a homily at the gathering of leaders of the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation on the occasion of commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification.

Archbishop Gregory, the chair of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops' Committee on Ecumenical and Religious Affairs, expressed hope for understanding "how much more work needs to be done in both our communities and by our Methodist partners as well in allowing the joint declaration to take root in the hearts of our people."

In short, the bilateral ecumenical dialogues must not only continue "the work of theological reception" but also undertake ongoing discussions concerning those unresolved aspects of the doctrine of salvation that are spelled out in the Joint Declaration.

In the same vein, Archbishop Gregory noted that "differences over ecclesial decision making and the relationship between justification and social ethics particularly call out for joint study and reflection."

Archbishop Gregory closed his homily with an analogy on tradition drawn from the pen of Dominican Cardinal Yves Congar (d. 1995), a pioneer in ecumenical theology: "Yves Congar once compared tradition with a person walking. I believe he had in mind all Christians on the ecumenical journey. In order to move forward, Congar said, the person must push off the ground —with one foot raised and the other on the ground. If the person kept both feet on the ground or lifted both in the air, he or she would be unable to advance."

Thus, Archbishop Gregory concluded: "My friends, you and I can only walk this next phase of the journey if we keep one foot in the tradition of those wise and holy persons who belong to the whole Christ, and then also, one foot moving forward to meet the challenges of our day."



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# Conference Follows Many Bills in House and Senate

*Continued from page 2*

matter of public safety, state and local governments provide transportation funding for these children to protect them on their way to school. State funding needs to be increased substantially in HB 291 to cover the costs of transporting these students. The Conference advocates appropriations of \$5 million per year to meet costs, an increase of \$2.2 million per year over the proposed budget.

### **Protect the Poor and Vulnerable Maintain the Social Safety Net**

The overwhelming issue of the legislative session, the estimated revenue shortfall of \$1.5 billion, threatens programs serving the poor and most vulnerable in the state. Additional revenues are needed to secure the safety net of social service programs serving those in need.

### **Faithful Citizenship Advocacy Network: Empowering Individuals to Participate in Government Public Policy Decisions**

An educated and involved citizenry is the best antidote to government decisions made without the benefit of public scrutiny and participation. Empowering individuals to participate in state and federal issues of concern, the Catholic Conference of Kentucky's Faithful Citizenship Advocacy Network ([www.ccky.org](http://www.ccky.org)) provides the invitation and opportunity to communicate with state and federal government decision-makers in Frankfort and in Washington, D.C.

The Conference invites each Catholic household in the Commonwealth to participate and communicate with government officials on issues impacting life from conception until natural death and everywhere in between. May God bless our combined efforts for the common good!

## **Become a Faithful Citizen Today: Clip and Mail in Now**

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Or fill out this form and mail it to us at 1042 Burlington Lane, Frankfort, KY, 40601, we will sign you up so you can help us make a difference in Frankfort and Washington.