



Vision

Summer 2020

Page 2

Message from NCOD:
PW 2021

Page 3

Installation of Bishop
Raica (*continued*)

Page 5

ASL Masses
Livestreamed

Page 6

Statement of U.S. Bishop
Chairmen: Death of
George Floyd and
National Protests

Page 7

Open Wide Our Hearts

Page 8

Religious Freedom
Week

Page 9

Forming Conscience for
Faithful Citizenship

Page 11

Learning Our Faith

Volume 39/Number 2

THE WAIT IS OVER: BISHOP STEVEN J. RAICA INSTALLED AS BIRMINGHAM'S FIFTH BISHOP

~Mary Dillard, *One Voice*

<https://bhmdiocese.org/news/the-wait-is-over-bishop-stein-j-raica-installed-as-birminghams-fifth-bishop>

The Diocese of Birmingham's wait for a new shepherd came to a end Wednesday, June 23. The Mass of Installation for Bishop Steven J. Raica was celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Paul in downtown Birmingham.

Unlike the night before during solemn vespers, the sun was shining brightly as the clergy lined up outside the cathedral to begin the procession. Once all the clergy and servers were inside, the doors to the cathedral were closed so Bishop Raica could make the ceremonious knock. With the custom hammer, hand-made by Cathedral employee Philipp Szabo, Bishop Raica knocked on the door three times, after which Archbishop Thomas Rodi,

Metropolitan of the Mobile Province, opened the door and welcomed Bishop Raica. Following his entrance, the bishop-elect venerated the crucifix held by Father Bryan Jerabek, pastor and rector of the Cathedral of St. Paul, then blessed those in the narthex with holy water.

Archbishop Rodi greeted all those present and thanked Bishop Emeritus Robert Baker for his service to the Church in Birmingham. He then asked Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, to read the Apostolic Letter of Appointment. After the letter was read, it was handed to Bishop Raica who carried it throughout the

A Pastoral Service for Persons who are Deaf or
Hard of Hearing

Greetings members and friends,

The Board of Directors hope you all are doing well and staying safe in this trying time. Please be assured of our prayers and thoughts for all of the Deaf ministries out there. There has been a tremendous adjustment in transitioning to “virtual ministry” for the time being. We have heard so many inspiring updates from your Regional Representatives in our Board meeting last night and we are so grateful for your willingness and dedication in continuing your Deaf Ministry. We all have not let the pandemic stop us from serving with Christ to our Deaf brothers and sisters! We look forward to what you have to offer in the coming months and kindly ask you to share your progress and resources with your Regional Representatives.

In regard to Pastoral Week 2021 Irvine, California, the Board has discussed this with careful deliberation and realized that safety is for our Pastoral Workers is our highest concern. We have decided to cancel in-person conference on January 7-11, 2021. In lieu of in-person conference, we are now in the process of developing and planning a “Harvest For The Workers” Webinar series. As soon as we have all the details planned, we will let you know. To help guide you as you plan for your budget, you will need to renew or purchase your membership with NCOD in order to access the webinar series. Membership prices remain the same. We had been looking forward to seeing you all in California this January! We are truly disappointed that this has to happen, but with our trust in the Holy Spirit, we can still meet virtually for the time being and will then rejoice when we meet in-person again on January 6- 10, 2022 in Savannah, Georgia. We will celebrate 50 years of NCOD there!

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to let your Regional Representative know. We will be in touch soon. Please keep in touch by checking our NCOD website. Meanwhile, enjoy your summer and be sure to take a vacation, even if it is a “staycation”!

Be courageous in bringing people to Christ. Pray for religious vocations!

NCOD Board of Directors



**The Official Publication of the
National Catholic Office for the Deaf**

Published quarterly by

**NCOD Home Office
7202 Buchanan Street
Landover Hills, MD 20784
www.ncod.org**

*Please email your articles, pictures, or announcements
for consideration in future issues to
ncodeditor@gmail.com
prior to the first of February, May, August, and November.*

NCOD Board of Directors

Episcopal Moderator

Most Rev. Steven J. Raica
Diocese of Birmingham, Alabama

Region I—The West

Secretary

Nancy Lopez—Orange, CA
NCODWest1@gmail.com

Region II—The South

David Casanova—Fort Worth, TX
NCODSouth2@gmail.com

Region III—The Midwest

Joan Macy—Lenexa, KS
NCODMidwest3@gmail.com

Region IV—Great Lakes

Minette Sternke—Peoria, IL
NCODGreatLakes4@gmail.com

Region V—The Northeast

Rick Johnston—Marlborough, MA
NCODNortheast5@gmail.com

Region VI—Southeast Atlantic

Stephen Eubanks—Fayetteville, GA
NCODSEAtlantic6@gmail.com

Region VII—Mid Atlantic

Vice-President

Lauren Lynch-Ryan—Landover Hills, MD
NCODMidAtlantic7@gmail.com

Deaf Pastoral Workers' Representative President

Fr. Shawn Carey—Boston, MA
ncodeafpw@gmail.com

ICDA-US Representative

Terri Matenaer—Milwaukee, WI
ncodicdarep@gmail.com

Members at Large

Pat Richey—Olathe, KS
richey1976@yahoo.com

Msgr. Glenn Nelson—Rockford, IL
RockfordHI@aol.com

R. Gregory Schott—Naples, FL
rgschott@comcast.net

cathedral for all those present to see. The last part of the Rite of Installation followed with the nuncio and the archbishop walking Birmingham's new bishop to his Cathedra, or bishop's chair. Archbishop Rodi then handed a smiling Bishop Raica the crosier of Bishop Joseph Vath, Birmingham's first bishop.

Concelebrating bishops included Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing, Bishop Kurt Burnette of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic, Bishop Mark Spalding of Nashville, Bishop Richard Stika of Knoxville, Bishop David Talley of Memphis, Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson, Bishop Louis Kihneman of Biloxi, Bishop William Wack of Pensacola-Tallahassee, and Bishop Emeritus Baker.

Keys to a Christian life

Birmingham's new bishop began his homily welcoming those present and acknowledging those unable to physically attend due to current pandemic restrictions. He also took the opportunity to thank Bishop Emeritus Baker for his "tenure of faithful episcopal ministry" in the Diocese of Birmingham. Of Bishop Baker, he said, "The priests, deacons, religious and faithful of Birmingham have been truly blessed by your dedication to ministry and your steadfast discipleship with Christ our Lord! I can already see that I have some big shoes to fill!"

He went on to assure the faithful that he is committed to being their shepherd "for better, for worse, in sickness and in health." As he continued, Bishop Raica highlighted three "keys" to help the Church of Birmingham "unlock the precise meaning" of the day.

The first key the bishop focused on was the "yes" that is required as witnessed through Mary, the Mother of Christ, and Mother of the Incarnate Word. He reflected on the "yes" saying, "The formal announcement of my transfer from Gaylord to Birmingham occurred on March 25, the Solemnity of the Annunciation ... That announcement by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary is one of the most significant, and I dare say, the most revolutionary events in Christian history. No longer did we have to try to go and find God somewhere in the heavens, as if everything depended on our reaching out to a Mystery hoping that we might catch a glimpse of God. Rather, we are told, 'The Word became Flesh.' God's Son, took our flesh. He came to find us!"

Bishop Raica expanded on his reflection by highlighting that Mary's "yes" and subsequent conception of Jesus "opened for us a relationship that is now unbounded

by time and dimension, but a reality that confronts us day in and day out." He continued, "It allows us to see that a relationship with a person, whose voice we can know, invites us to know that our humanity is profoundly loved beyond anything we could ever imagine. It has profound dignity because each human being - especially in light of our recent civil turmoil and unrest, reflects the very image and likeness of God regardless of our age, whether we are unborn or in our waning years, the color of our skin or economic status. All are part of the one human family with a mosaic of experiences and cultures."



The second key mentioned was "looking" for Christ. With the Mass of Installation being celebrated as a votive Mass of St. John the Baptist, Bishop Raica noted the saint's words from the Gospel of John, "Look, there's the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." The bishop stressed that in any form of evangelization, the very first word is "look." In fact, the bishop said that we must open our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts, for the "One you have been waiting for ... is here!"

The last key of "going forth on mission" is exemplified by the patron of the Diocese of Birmingham, St. Paul. It was Paul who became an ardent evangelist and his life has "become a point of reference in mission." Bishop Raica told the faithful that as Paul proclaimed Christ, "So must we." "Our faith doesn't settle for minimums, but for real total engagement with reality. May we be bold to live up to the noble calling of becoming truly ourselves, what God has planned and purposed for each of us - people who are redeemed, joyful, fulfilled, and free," he proclaimed.

Bishop Raica concluded his homily by bringing together the three keys that he says will "open the door for a fruitful life as a Christian here in the Diocese of Birmingham." "To say 'yes' to God's invitation, to 'look' and see Christ around us as the answer to our hearts'

deepest longing; and, to 'go' out and embark on a mission of witnessing God's love by our lives ... becoming a 'missionary disciple' offering hope to a world marred by violence, hate and lack of respect for others. That is a noble mission and one we should not shirk from each and every day, leaving a unique mark behind that says - through me, one could see Christ, know Christ and experience Christ's love. A 'yes' to God's invitation, to 'look' and see Christ around and with us, and 'going out' on mission. May God provide us with the grace and strength to live for Him each and

every day!"

Bishop Raica succeeds Bishop Emeritus Robert J. Baker, who served the Diocese of Birmingham since October of 2007.

Bishop Raica was born Nov. 8, 1952, ordained a priest Oct. 14, 1978, named as an Honorary Prelate of His Holiness in 1998, ordained and installed as Bishop of Gaylord, Michigan Aug. 28, 2014, and appointed Bishop of Birmingham March 25, 2020.



Bishop FAQ

(from *Compendium of the Catholic Church*)

How do the bishops carry out their mission of teaching? (888-890)

Since they are authentic witnesses of the apostolic faith and are invested with the authority of Christ, the bishops in union with the Pope have the duty of proclaiming the Gospel faithfully and authoritatively to all. By means of a supernatural sense of faith, the people of God unfailingly adhere to the faith under the guidance of the living Magisterium of the Church.

What is the competence of the College of Bishops? (883-885)

The College of Bishops in union with the Pope, and never without him, also exercise supreme and full authority over the Church.

When is the infallibility of the Magisterium exercised? (891)

Infallibility is exercised when the Roman pontiff, in virtue of his office as the Supreme Pastor of the Church, or the College of Bishops, in union with the Pope especially when joined together in an Ecumenical Council, proclaim by a definitive act a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. Infallibility is also exercised when the Pope and Bishops in their ordinary Magisterium are in agreement in proposing a doctrine as definitive. Every one of the faithful must adhere to such teaching with the obedience of faith.

How do Bishops exercise their ministry of sanctification? (893)

Bishops sanctify the Church by dispensing the grace of Christ by their ministry of the word and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, and also by their prayers, their example and their work.

How do the Bishops exercise their function of governing? (894-896)

Every bishop, insofar as he is a member of the College of Bishops, bears collegially the care for all particular Churches and for the entire Church along with all the other bishops who are united to the Pope. A bishop to whom a particular Church has been entrusted governs that Church with the authority of his own sacred power which is ordinary and immediate and exercised in the name of Christ, the Good Shepherd, in communion with the entire Church and under the guidance of the Successor of Peter.



Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, religious, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help us respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Coronavirus and the Church

We unite our prayers with you as we face the impact of COVID-19. Many places have imposed restrictions and lockdowns aiming to slow the spread of illness. Masses in many dioceses being limited until further notice. In light of that, many parishes are using technology to broadcast the Sunday liturgy, in which several of our deaf and hearing priests now offer live-streaming of ASL Masses for our deaf brothers and sisters who can watch from home. Here is the list of ASL Masses currently being live-streamed. If you know of others, please email the info to Fr. Shawn Carey at ncodpresident@gmail.com. Check the NCOD website for updates at www.ncod.org.

Saturdays

Fr. Thomas Rozman – Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Mechanicsburg, Diocese of Harrisburg, PA
ASL Vigil Mass 4:00pm EST at stjosephmech.org

Fr. Matthew Hysell OP – Ministerial Priest for the Archdiocese of Edmonton & Doctoral Candidate for Sacred Theology at Dominican University College in Ottawa, Canada
ASL Vigil Mass 7:30pm EST at facebook.com/icdacanadiansession

Sundays

(Masses are organized by time zones)

Fr. Shawn Carey – Director of the Boston Deaf Apostolate, Archdiocese of Boston, MA
ASL Mass 11:00am EST at youtube.com/user/DeafApostolateBoston (recordings at bostondeafcatholic.org)

Fr. Mike Depcik – Director of Catholic Deaf Community, St John's Deaf Center, Archdiocese of Detroit, MI
ASL Mass 11:30am EST at facebook.com/deafmass

Fr. Seán Loomis – Chaplain & Coordinator for the Philadelphia Deaf Apostolate, Archdiocese of Philadelphia
ASL Mass will be posted after 6pm EST at facebook.com/DeafCatholicPhilly

Monsignor Glenn Nelson J.C.L. – Director of Deaf Apostolate & Vicar General, Diocese of Rockford, IL
ASL Mass 10:00am CST at facebook.com/RockfordDeafApostolate

Fr. Michael Hermes – St. Paul Catholic Church, Olathe, KS
ASL Interpreter 10:00 am CST at <https://www.spcatholic.org/>

Fr. Dave Korth – Sacred Heart Church, Diocese of Omaha, NE
ASL Interpreter 10:30 am CST at sacredheartchurchomaha.org or YouTube.com/SacredHeartChurchOmaha

Bishop Michael Olson – St. Patrick's Cathedral, Diocese of Fort Worth, TX
ASL Interpreter 11:00am CST at fvdioc.org

Fr. Tom Coyte – Director of Colorado Catholic Deaf Ministry, Lakewood, CO
ASL & English 10:00 am MST at stbernadettelakewood.org or [St Bernadette Parish Lakewood CO Face-Book Page](https://StBernadetteParishLakewoodCOFaceBookPage) or [St. Bernadette Parish Lakewood CO YouTube Channel](https://StBernadetteParishLakewoodCOYouTubeChannel)

Very Reverend Patrick Schafer OFM – Holy Family Church, Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Albuquerque, NM
ASL & English 8:00am MST / ASL & Spanish 10:00am MST at [Holy Family Church Albuquerque FaceBook Page](https://HolyFamilyChurchAlbuquerqueFaceBookPage) or [Holy Family Church Albuquerque YouTube Channel](https://HolyFamilyChurchAlbuquerqueYouTubeChannel)

Fr. Tom Schweitzer with **Deacon Tomas Garcia** – Holy Angels Catholic Church of the Deaf, Archdiocese of Los Angeles, CA
ASL & English 8:30 am PST / ASL & Spanish 11:30 am PST at youtube.com/user/hacofthedeaf/live



Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests

~www.usccb.org

WASHINGTON – Seven U.S. bishop chairmen of committees within the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops have issued a statement in the wake of the death of Mr. George Floyd and the protests which have broken out in Minneapolis and in other cities in the United States.

Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; Archbishop Nelson J. Pérez of Philadelphia, chairman of the Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, chairman of the Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs; Bishop David G. O’Connell, auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, chairman of the Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; and Bishop Joseph N. Perry, auxiliary bishop of Chicago, chairman of the Subcommittee on African American Affairs have issued the following statement:

We are broken-hearted, sickened, and outraged to watch another video of an African American man being killed before our very eyes. What’s more astounding is that this is happening within mere weeks of several other such occurrences. This is the latest wake-up call that needs to be answered by each of us in a spirit of determined conversion.

Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to be bandied about when convenient. It is a real and present danger that must be met head on. As members of the Church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference. We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice.

While it is expected that we will plead for peaceful non-violent protests, and we certainly do, we also stand in passionate support of communities that are understandably outraged. Too many communities around this country feel their voices are not being heard, their complaints about racist treatment are unheeded, and we are not doing enough to point out that this deadly

treatment is antithetical to the Gospel of Life.

As we said eighteen months ago in our most recent pastoral letter against racism, [Open Wide Our Hearts](#), for people of color some interactions with police can be fraught with fear and even danger. People of good conscience must never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity and even their lives. Indifference is not an option. “As bishops, we unequivocally state that racism is a life issue.”

We join Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis in praying for the repose of the soul of Mr. George Floyd and all others who have lost their lives in a similar manner. We plead for an end to the violence in the wake of this tragedy and for the victims of the rioting. We pray for comfort for grieving families and friends. We pray for peace across the United States, particularly in Minnesota, while the legal process moves forward. We also anticipate a full investigation that results in rightful accountability and actual justice.

We join our brother bishops to challenge everyone to come together, particularly with those who are from different cultural backgrounds. In this encounter, let us all seek greater understanding amongst God’s people. So many people who historically have been disenfranchised continue to experience sadness and pain, yet they endeavor to persevere and remain people of great faith. We encourage our pastors to encounter and more authentically accompany them, listen to their stories, and learn from them, finding substantive ways to enact systemic change. Such encounters will start to bring about the needed transformation of our understanding of true life, charity, and justice in the United States. Hopefully, then there will be many voices speaking out and seeking healing against the evil of racism in our land.

As we anticipate the Solemnity of Pentecost this weekend, we call upon all Catholics to pray and work toward a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray for a supernatural desire to rid ourselves of the harm that bias and prejudice cause. We call upon Catholics to pray to the Holy Spirit for the Spirit of Truth to touch the hearts of all in the United States and to come down upon our criminal justice and law enforcement systems. Finally, let each and every Catholic, regardless of their ethnicity, beg God to heal our deeply broken view of each other, as well as our deeply broken society.





open wide our hearts

the enduring call to love *a pastoral letter against racism*

Practical Steps for Eradicating Racism: An Invitation

This Guide was prepared to assist Catholics and people of good will in reflecting on the evil and harm of racism. While this is not a comprehensive list, it provides actionable steps that may assist Catholics to reflect and respond in faith. With the aid of Holy Scripture, Catholic social teaching, and sacred tradition, this is an open invitation to journey toward reconciliation.

Racism is evil because it attacks the inherent dignity of the human person, created in the image and likeness of God. The persistence of racism demands our attention now. Racism emerges in the action and inactions of individuals; and it is embedded in our instructions and public policies. Our faith calls us both to personal conversion and to transformation of our society.

The following are some actionable steps pastors and their communities may undertake to this end:

1. Read (or re-read) *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love—A Pastoral Letter Against Racism* using the accompanying Study Guide. Visit www.usccb.org/racism.
2. Create various large and small group opportunities for family and community members to process their feelings in the midst of news and commentary about vulnerable populations and law enforcement. Encourage participants to reflect or share their own upbringing regarding comments in the home, from parents and individuals, media and entertainment, even practices of the Church about the merits or demerits of certain groups of people made to be “the other”. Ask. “How have I knowingly or unconsciously made this formation part of my world view? Where could I have spoken up but didn’t?”
3. Arrange a safe space for young people to reflect and pray about racism and recent events. Listen to the current experiences of young people. Encourage and allow their creative expression. Invite them to generate methodologies that are meaningful to them.
4. Attend an intergenerational interracial virtual town hall discussion on racism. Respect that for some African Americans, Hispanics and others, talking about personal racial experiences in a mixed race setting is painful as it is like reopening a wound that hadn’t fully healed.
5. Use a pastoral and non-partisan lens to respond to concerns of family and community members about racism, policing and public safety. Do not politicize this. Lean on Gospel values, instead.
6. Contact your pastor, parish council or diocesan office to discuss possible ways to dialogue with local law enforcement. Some community organizations funded by the bishops through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) are leading these efforts in their communities. [See what is happening near you.](#)
7. [Learn about structural racism](#) and its roots in your community and get involved in the work to address it. It might look like housing discrimination that continues to contribute to segregated communities or disparate access to quality education.
8. Invite your parish to incorporate regular dialogue among parishioners about their experiences with racism, prejudice and racial discrimination.
9. Invite your parish or faith-sharing group to host a conversation with a group of African-American, Latino, Indigenous, or African men and/or young people about their personal experiences with law enforcement.
10. Encourage religious education and faith-sharing groups, as well as priests and deacons at your parish to speak out against racism and for personal responsibility to eradicate it. With children, use the storybook [Everyone Belongs](#) as a starting point for conversation. With teens and adults, explore how anti-racism action looks. Continue to study and understand racism as it manifested in the past and does so today.



Copyright © 2020, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. All rights reserved. This text may be reproduced in whole or in part without alteration for nonprofit educational use, provided such reprints are not sold and include this notice. This resource was developed by the Subcommittee on African American Affairs, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church. *This resource and many others are available at www.usccb.org/racism.*

Responding to Current Events: *Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving*



RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM
WEEK

June 22–29

Beginning June 22, the Feast of Saints Thomas More and John Fisher, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops celebrates Religious Freedom Week. Join us in promoting religious freedom For the Good of All.

All people desire to know their Creator. All people have a natural impulse to seek the good and to live in accordance with that good. All people can flourish when they pursue the truth about God and respond to the truth.

Religious freedom means that all people have the space to flourish. Religious freedom is both an American value and an important part of Catholic teaching on human dignity. When we promote religious freedom, we promote the common good and thus strengthen the life of our nation and the community of nations.

Learn more at www.usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek!



(USCIB.org/religiousfreedomweek)

www.usccb.org/freedom

Twitter: @USCCBFreedom

For text and action alerts, text "FREEDOM" to 84576



Prayer to
Overcome Racism

Mary, friend and mother to all, through your Son, God has found a way to unite himself to every human being, called to be one people, sisters and brothers to each other. We ask for your help in calling on your Son, seeking forgiveness for the times when we have failed to love and respect one another. We ask for your help in obtaining from your Son the grace we need to overcome the evil of racism and to build a just society. We ask for your help in following your Son, so that prejudice and animosity will no longer infect our minds or hearts but will be replaced with a love that respects the dignity of each person. Mother of the Church, the Spirit of your Son Jesus warms our hearts: pray for us. Amen.

Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary for Her Powerful Intercession

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.



Part I of II: Our Call as Catholic Citizens

This brief document is Part I of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Conscience for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Forming Conscience for Faithful Citizenship is the teaching document of the Catholic Bishops of the United States on the political responsibility of Catholics. It provides guidance for all who seek to exercise their rights and duties as citizens. As Catholics, we bring the richness of our faith to the public square. We draw from both faith and reason as we seek to affirm the dignity of the human person and the common good of all.

Everyone living in this country is called to participate in public life and contribute to the common good.¹ In *Rejoice and Be Glad* [*Gaudete et exsultate*], Pope Francis writes:

Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace....You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor.²

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Why Does the Church Teach About Issues Affecting Public Policy?

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34).

The US Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to proclaim and live out their faith without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning its moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experiences serving those in need.

Who In the Church Should Participate In Political Life?

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to any political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity. This should not discourage us. On the contrary, it makes our obligations to act all the more urgent. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties,

and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matter that affect their lives and the common good. Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.

How Can Catholic Social Teaching Help Guide Our Participation?

In the words of Pope Francis, "progress in building a people in peace, justice, and fraternity depends on four principles related to constant tensions present in every social reality. These derive from the pillars of the Church's social doctrine, which serve as 'primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena.'"³ The four principles include the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Taken together, these principles provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called a "consistent ethic of life" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 22).

Rightly understood, this ethic does not treat all issues as morally equivalent; nor does it reduce Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens "to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest" (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following summary of the four principles highlights several themes of Catholic social teaching for special consideration: these include human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for God's creation, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.⁴

The Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is a rich and multifaceted Catholic teaching on human dignity summarized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Every human being "must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness...This entails above all the requirement not only of simple respect on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person" (no. 131). The *Compendium* continues, "It is necessary to 'consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity' (*Gaudium es Spes*, no. 27).

Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society.”⁵

Subsidiarity

It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, and local realities—in short, for those economic, social, cultural, recreational, professional, and political communities to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.⁶ The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions; yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.⁷

The Common Good

The common good is comprised of “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”⁸

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met**. Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, and to the larger society.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. An economic system must serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by **respecting the dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, to treat employers and coworkers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

We have a duty to care for God’s creation, which Pope Francis refers to in *Laudato Si* as “our common home.”⁹ We all are called to be careful stewards of God’s creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future. Pope Francis, consistent with St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message, 1990 and 2010), has lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. Pope Francis speaks of an “ecological debt” (no.51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations. And

he calls all of us to an “ecological conversion” (no.219), by which “the effects of [our] relationship with the world around [us]”.¹⁰ Indeed, this concern with “natural ecology” is an indispensable part of the broader “human ecology,” which encompasses not only material but moral and social dimensions as well.

Solidarity

Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to...the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible for *all*.” It is found in “a commitment to the good of one’s neighbor with the readiness, in the Gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to ‘serve him’ instead of oppressing him for one’s own advantage.”¹¹

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

In a special way, our solidarity must find expression in the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor, the marginalized.

Conclusion

In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation.

Notes

- 1 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos.1913-15.
- 2 *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 25.
- 3 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221
- 4 These principles are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), no. 160. For more information on these principles, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2016, nos. 40ff.
- 5 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 132. This summary represents only a few highlights from the fuller treatment of the human person in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. For the fuller treatment, see especially nos. 124-159 where many other important aspects of human dignity are treated.
- 6 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.
- 7 *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 4-6.
- 8 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164
- 9 *Laudato Si*, no. 77.
- 10 *Laudato Si*. No. 217.
- 11 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27)

Copyright © 2020, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC. All rights reserved.

Quotes from the *Compendium on the Social Doctrine of the Church*, copyright © 2004, Libreria Editrice Vaticana (LEV), Vatican City State. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

Quotes from *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato Si*, and *Gaudete et Exsultate* copyright © 2013, 2015, 2018, Libreria Editrice Vaticana (LEV), Vatican City State. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

ISBN:978-30137-545-2
Publication No.7-545



Learning Our Faith: **The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

This edition is pulled from Part One: The Profession of Faith; Section Two—The Profession of the Christian Faith; Chapter Two “I Believe in Jesus Christ the Only Son of God” and Chapter Three “I Believe in the Holy Spirit”

How is the Resurrection the work of the Most Holy Trinity? (648-650)

The Resurrection of Christ is a transcendent work of God. The three Persons act together according to what is proper to them: the Father manifests his power; the Son “takes again” the life which he freely offered (John 10:17), reuniting his soul and his body which the Spirit brings to life and glorifies.

What is the saving meaning of the Resurrection? (651-655, 658)

The Resurrection is the climax of the Incarnation. It confirms the divinity of Christ and all the things which he did and taught. It fulfills all the divine promises made for us. Furthermore the risen Christ, the conqueror of sin and death, is the principle of our justification and our Resurrection. It procures for us now the grace of filial adoption which is a real share in the life of the only begotten Son. At the end of time he will raise up our bodies.

Jesus ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty

What does the Ascension mean? (659-667)

After forty days during which Jesus showed himself to the Apostles with ordinary human features which veiled his glory as the Risen One, Christ ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father. He is the Lord who now in his humanity reigns in the everlasting glory of the Son of God and constantly intercedes for us before the Father. He sends us his Spirit and he gives us the hope of one day reaching the place he has prepared for us.

From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead

How does the Lord Jesus now reign? (668-674, 680)

As the Lord of the cosmos and of history, the Head of his Church, the glorified Christ mysteriously remains on earth where his kingdom is already present in seed and in its beginning in the Church. One day he will return in glory but we do not know the time. Because of this we live in watchful anticipation, praying “Come, Lord” (Revelation 22:20).

How will the coming of the Lord in glory happen? (675-677, 680)

After the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world the glorious coming of Christ will take place. Then will come the definitive triumph of God in the Parousia and the Last Judgment. Thus the Kingdom of God will be realized.

How will Christ judge the living and the dead? (678-679, 681-682)

Christ will judge with the power he has gained as the Redeemer of the world who came to bring salvation to all. The secrets of hearts will be brought to light as well as the conduct of each one toward God and toward his neighbor. Everyone, according to how he has lived, will either be filled with life or damned for eternity. In this way, the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13) will come about in which “God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28).

The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

What is the meaning of the affirmation “Outside the Church there is no salvation”? (846-848)

This means that all salvation comes from Christ, the Head, through the Church which is his body. Hence they cannot be saved who, knowing the Church as founded by Christ and necessary for salvation, would refuse to enter her or remain in her. At the same time, thanks to Christ and to his Church, those who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ and his Church but sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, try to do his will as it is known through the dictates of conscience can attain eternal salvation.

Why must the Church proclaim the Gospel to the whole world? (849-851)

The Church must do so because Christ has given the command: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). This missionary mandate of the Lord has its origin in the eternal love of God who has sent his Son and the Holy Spirit because he “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

In what sense is the Church missionary? (852-856)

The Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, continues the mission of Christ himself in the course of history. Christians must, therefore, proclaim to everyone the Good News borne by Christ; and, following his path they must be ready for self-sacrifice, even unto martyrdom.

Why is the Church *apostolic*? (857, 869)

The Church is apostolic in her *origin* because she has been built on “the foundation of the apostles” (Ephesians 2:20). She is apostolic in her *teaching* which is the same as that of the Apostles. She is apostolic by reason of her *structure* insofar as she is taught, sanctified, and guided until Christ returns by the Apostles through their successors who are the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter.

In what does the mission of the Apostles consist? (858-861)

The word “Apostle” means “one who is sent.” Jesus, the One sent by the Father, called to himself twelve of his disciples and appointed them as his Apostles, making them the chosen witnesses of his Resurrection and the foundation of his Church. He gave them the command to continue his own mission saying, “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (John 20:21); and he promised to remain with them until the end of the world.

What is apostolic succession? (861-865)

Apostolic succession is the transmission by means of the sacrament of Holy Orders of the mission and power of the Apostles to their successors, the bishops. Thanks to this transmission the Church remains in communion of faith and life with origin, while through the centuries she carries on her apostolate for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

The Faithful: Hierarchy, Laity, Consecrated Life

Who are the faithful? (871-872, 934)

The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through Baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ’s priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church. There exists a true equality among them in their dignity as children of God.

How are the people of God formed? (873)

Among the faithful by divine institution there exist *sacred ministries* who have received the sacrament of Holy Orders and who form the hierarchy of the Church. The other members of the Church are called the *laity*. In both the hierarchy and the laity there are certain of the faithful who are *consecrated* in a special manner to God by the profession of the evangelical counsels: chastity or celibacy, poverty, and obedience.

Why did Christ institute an ecclesiastical hierarchy? (874-877, 935)

Christ instituted an ecclesiastical hierarchy with the mission of feeding the people of God in his name and for this purpose gave it authority. The hierarchy is formed of sacred ministers: bishops, priests, and deacons. Thanks to the sacrament of Orders, bishops and priests act in the exercise of their ministry in the name and person of Christ the Head. Deacons minister to the people of God in the *diakonia* (service) of word, liturgy, and charity.

How is the collegial dimension of Church ministry carried out? (877)

After the example of the twelve Apostles who were chosen and sent out together by Christ, the unity of the Church’s hierarchy is at the service of the communion of all the faithful. Every bishop exercises his ministry as a member of the episcopal college in communion with the Pope and shares with him in the care of the universal Church. Priests exercise their ministry in the presbyterate of the local Church in communion with their bishop and under his direction.

Why does ecclesial ministry also have a personal character? (878-879)

Ecclesial ministry also has a personal character inasmuch as each minister, in virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, is responsible before Christ who called him personally and conferred on him his mission.

What is the mission of the Pope? (881-882, 936-937)

The Pope, Bishop of Rome and Successor of Saint Peter, is the perpetual, visible source and foundation of the unity of the Church. He is the vicar of Christ, the head of the College of Bishops and pastor of the universal Church over which he has by divine institution full, supreme, immediate, and universal power.

What is the meaning of the word “*Amen*” with which we conclude our profession of faith? (1064-1065)

The Hebrew word “*Amen*,” which also concludes the last book of Sacred Scripture, some of the prayers of the New Testament, and the liturgical prayers of the Church, expresses our confident and total “yes” to what we professed in the Creed, entrusting ourselves completely to him who is the definitive “*Amen*” (Revelation 3:14; emphasis added), Christ the Lord.



National Catholic Office for the Deaf

7202 Buchanan Street
Landover Hills, MD 20784
info@ncod.org
www.ncod.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



National Catholic Office for the Deaf

Membership Form

For October 1 to September 30

Due October 30

NCOD Mission Statement:

Spread God's message through the support of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Pastoral Ministry so that we may all be one in Christ

New Member Renewal Vision Subscription Only

Name: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____ Diocese: _____

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Deaf-Blind Hearing

Phone (W): _____ VP Voice Phone (H): _____ VP Voice

Email: _____

Name of Designated Voter (for Family & Executive Members only): _____

Please note: All of the above information is printed in the Membership Directory.

Do you want your personal data published in the Membership Directory? Yes No

NCOD needs your assistance to provide complete and accurate information. Thank you!

Annual Membership Fees (USA Rates)

Individual \$70 (Pastoral Worker Yes ___ or No ___) Student \$10 Family \$100

Executive \$250 (Diocese, Agencies, & Organizations) Donation: _____ (Tax Deductible)

Vision Subscription Only (non-member)

One Year \$20 US \$30 International OR Two Year \$35 US \$45 International

Mail Information: NCOD Membership
7202 Buchanan Street
Landover Hills, MD 20784

Contact Information:
(301) 841-8209 VP
www.ncod.org