DIOCESAN OFFICES CLOSED
The diocesan offices will be closed on Friday, March 9 for a staff retreat. The Catholic Messenger offices will be open for business as usual.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Fr. Robert Shortall: 1429 Bosque Dr., Garland, TX 75040-5330

DIOCESAN SUPPORT DAY
The Diocese is offering two workshops for parish and school personnel on Thursday, April 19 from 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. The morning session will cover finance issues. The afternoon session will cover human resources issues. A complete list of topics and the schedule for the day is included in the attached registration form. Join the sessions in person at the chancery or via the interactive computer webinar. Lunch provided. There is no fee for attending; funded by the Annual Diocesan Appeal.

Parishes and schools will be receiving an e-mail invitation to a “practice webinar session” on Tuesday, March 6 from 2 – 4 p.m. to test connectivity to the webinar with a computer.

Following the Diocesan Support Day, webinars with the chancery staff will be offered on the first Tuesdays of each month from 2 – 4 p.m. More information is available at www.davenportdiocese.org/comm. If you have questions please contact Laurie Hoeftling, hoeftling@davenportdiocese.org or 563-888-4220.

FINANCE
Budget: The 2012-2013 budget documents will be emailed early March and due August 1.

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN
To report child abuse contact: Iowa Department of Human Services Child Abuse Hotline: 800-362-2178 and if it involves clergy or church personnel also notify Alicia Owens, Victim Assistance Coordinator: 563-349-5002, vaedav@attglobal.net or PO Box 232, Bettendorf, IA 52722-0004.

SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE
Income Tax Help: Low-and moderate income working families may qualify for help from two federal tax benefits: Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). This year eligible low-wage families in 2012 may be eligible for an EIC worth up to $5,751. For more information about the Tax Credit go to www.eitcoutreach.org. Also, please encourage families to file their taxes through Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA). This offers free tax help for low-to-moderate income people who cannot prepare their own return. To find a current location call 800-906-9887 or visit the VITA website, http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=219171,00.html.

Available Grants: Application deadline May 31
   Operation Rice Bowl: For those providing/supporting direct services to people who are hungry (first foot of social justice). If your parish or community would like to apply go to http://www.davenportdiocese.org/socialaction/sacrsapplyingfororbgrant.htm.

   Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD): For those organizations and projects that promote systemic change (second foot of social justice). To apply please send your request in a 1-2 page letter along with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development Grant Agreement. To view grant criteria and obtain a copy of the agreement go to http://www.davenportdiocese.org/socialaction/sacchdapplyingforngrant.htm.

All grant requests must be post marked by May 31 and sent to Diocese of Davenport, Social Action Office, 780 W. Central Park Ave., Davenport 52804-1901. For questions call Loxi Hopkins at 563-888-4212.

FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

Christ in Others (COR) retreats, for youth in grades 10-12, will be held on the following two weekends:
- March 9-11 at St. Joseph’s Parish in DeWitt
- March 23-25 at Holy Trinity Parish in Keota
Go to http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/COR.htm for more information.

Junior High Youth Rally will be March 25 at Regina Catholic Education Center in Iowa City. Our keynoter will be Vince Nims. Parish leaders can find guidance and resources to promote the rally and prepare your parish group at http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/Youth%20Rally.htm. Go to www.davenportyouth.org to see a video message from Vince, or go to Diocese of Davenport Youth Ministry on Facebook for information on this and all other youth ministry events and programs. Early registration deadline is March 12, and final registration deadline ($5 higher) is March 19. For more information, contact Pat Finan at (641) 842-5148 or finan@davenportdiocese.org

A Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) retreat will be held June 9-1. TEC is a three-day retreat focusing on the Paschal Mystery (dying, rising and going forth to serve Christ). It is for high school juniors and seniors, including students who will graduate this spring and those who will be juniors this fall. Registration material will be available soon. For more information, contact Pat Finan.

Catholics in Action, our annual high school youth service retreat, will be held June 24-26 at Regina High School in Iowa City. CIA brings nearly 100 Catholic youth (incoming freshmen through graduating seniors) together for three days of service, prayer, learning and fun. More information about CIA can be found at www.davenportyouth.org.

The Iowa Christian Leadership Institute will be held Aug. 5-10 at the Christian Conference Center south of Newton. Students in grades 10-12 are invited to learn leadership skills in a Catholic context. Go to www.davenportyouth.org for more information, including a brochure, application, and scholarship information.

The Diocesan High School Youth Rally will be held Sunday, Oct. 21 at the Coralville Marriott. Our keynoter will be John Donahue-Grossman.

For information about these and other youth ministry events and resources, go to www.davenportyouth.org or contact Pat Finan at finan@davenportdiocese.org or 641 842-5148.

The Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies is a ministry education program offered at St. Ambrose University in conjunction with the Center for Ministry Development for those in ministry with youth ages 11 to 18, in both parish and school settings. The program equips leaders with knowledge, skills, practical tools and techniques needed for creative and comprehensive youth ministry. The program includes eight courses over two summers. The primary aim of the program is to promote personal, spiritual, and ministerial growth. The certificate program is utilized in a number of ways:
- as an integrated formation program leading to a Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies
- as an enrichment or continuing education program for veteran leaders
- as a workshop series which can be taken on a course-by-course basis by professional or volunteer leaders.

The course titles are Fostering the Faith Growth of Youth through:
- June 7 – 8: Evangelization and Catechesis
- June 9 – 10: Pastoral Care
- July 12 – 13: Justice and Service
- July 14 – 15: Prayer and Worship

Each class is $200 for the first parish/school participant, $140 each for 2 parish/school participants, and $100 each for 3 or more parish/school participants. Books are $52 for each class and housing is available upon request. For more information or to register please contact the site coordinator, Stella O’Rourke, at 563/333-6083.
Fr. Ronald Rolheiser will be the speaker for the 2012 Iowa Faith Formation Conference, to be held Saturday, April 14, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish in Hiawatha. Registration deadline is April 2. Fr. Rolheiser, a nationally syndicated columnist featured weekly in The Catholic Messenger, will speak on “Living the Ups and Downs of our Faith: Dark Nights and Doubt, A Failure of Faith or a Failure of Imagination?” The event will be from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A registration flier can be found at http://www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform/index.htm.

**Marriage and Parenting Resource:** Attached is the March version of “Marriage Moments and Parenting Pointers.” This is produced by Susan Vogt and she has excellent resources to support couples and families. Go to http://www.susanvogt.net/index.html.

**In the Vineyard Newsletter** has returned. First published in 2007, this newsletter is designed to support lay ecclesial ministers as they continue the message and mission of Jesus in their work and ministry in the Diocese of Davenport. Kathy Weiss of The Catholic Messenger will author this newsletter four times a year. The current issue is attached. Past issues may be found on the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org, chancery/faith formation/lay ministry. Quarterly issues will continue to be archived on the website.

**Marriage Preparation Weekends:**
- April 28-29: Williamsburg, St. Mary, registration deadline is April 20
- August 11-12: Mount Pleasant, St. Alphonsus, registration deadline is August 3

The registration form is on the diocesan website, www.davenportdiocese.org (Chancery>Faith Formation > Marriage and Family). Registration is $125 per couple. For information about marriage preparation in our diocese or neighboring dioceses contact Barb Butterworth, 563-888-4240 or butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org or IlaMae Hanisch, hanisch@davenportdiocese.org.

**Ministry Formation Program (MFP):** If you or someone you know is interested in joining a Ministry Formation Program please contact IlaMae Hanisch, 641-791-3435 or hanisch@davenportdiocese.org. We have an on-site group that meets in Davenport at the Chancery and DVD groups that meet once a month in West Burlington, Iowa City, Davenport and Newton.

**You are welcome to join any or all the remaining courses at any time:**

**Year I: Basic (English):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 17 &amp; 24</th>
<th>Personal/Pastoral Themes for Ministry</th>
<th>April 21 &amp; 28</th>
<th>Anointing/Reconciliation</th>
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**Year I: Basic (Spanish):** Matrimonio; El Bautismo; La Reconciliación La Unción de los Enfermos; La Confirmación; Catolicismo y Temas Personales Pastorales para el Ministerio. Sessions will be held at St. James, Washington on the following Sundays, 3-6 p.m.: March 18; April 22; May 20; June 3; July 15 and Aug. 5.

**Liturgy Specialization Track:** Courses and practicum will be held at St. Vincent Center, Davenport, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on the following dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>April 21</th>
<th>RCIA/Triduum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 12</td>
<td>Parish Devotions (intercultural issues/Marian devotions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2</td>
<td>Parish Devotions (Eucharistic Adoration, Book of Blessings)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 16</td>
<td>Practicum: Devotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>Pastoral Care of the Sick, Funerals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 4</td>
<td>Marriage, Baptism, Reconciliation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 18</td>
<td>Practicum: Funeral Rites</td>
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</tbody>
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**ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY CHAIR OF CATHOLIC STUDIES LECTURE**

Renowned biblical scholar, Luke Timothy Johnson, Ph.D. will present the 2012 Chair of Catholic Studies Lecture on Tuesday, April 17 at 7:00 p.m. in the Rogalski Center ballroom. Dr. Johnson’s lecture is entitled: “How is the Bible True? Let Me Count the Ways.” Dr. Johnson is a highly sought-after lecturer, a member of several editorial and advisory boards, and a senior fellow at Emory University’s Center for the Study of Law and Religion. He received the prestigious 2011 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his most recent book, Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity, which explores the relationship between early
Christianity and Greco-Roman paganism. A prolific author, Dr. Johnson has penned numerous scholarly articles and more than 25 books. His 1986 book The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation, now in its second edition, is widely used in seminaries and departments of religion throughout the world. The Commonweal Speakers Program is a supporting partner in presenting this year’s lecture.

OUR LADY OF THE PRAIRIE RETREAT, WHEATLAND
Visit www.chmiowa.org to learn more about Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat. For direct inquiries: 563-336-8414 or olpretreat@gmail.com.

Spring come to the Quiet: March 13
9:30 am to 3:30 pm
When winter is getting old it is time to watch for signs of an emerging Spring. The day is yours to shape as you will after a brief introduction into the springtime of our lives. Fee: $20

Knit One, Pray Too!: March 21
9:30 am – 3:30 pm
The rhythmic nature of knitting encourages contemplation and invites openness to the Spirit. Bring size 11 or 13 knitting needles, 3-6 oz. skeins of yarn (or special project in progress), and join us as we create a prayer shawl, scarf or special gift for someone in need of comfort. We will knit and pray together, share “yarns” of our individual journeys, and enjoy the beauty at the Prairie. Fee: $20

SoulCollage for Women: March 23-25
Kathy Schmittgens, SSND
Friday, 7:00 pm – Sunday, 11:00 am
SoulCollage is a creative and satisfying collage process. You make your own deck of cards – each collage card represents one aspect of your personality or soul. Use the collage cards to answer life’s questions and participate in self-discovery. Deepen your understanding of the relationships between your personality parts, you and your family/community/world, and you and your dreams, symbols and spirit. Fee: $100

Simple Bookbinding: March 28
Bill Hannon
9:30 am – 2:30 pm
The bookbinding process will be explained using simple materials and each participant will bind at least four small books to take with them at the end of the workshop. All tools, materials, directions will be supplied. Fee: $25

April 5-8: Triduum at the Prairie
Thurs. 9:30 am – Sat. 3:00 pm
Come for quiet days focused on preparation for Easter. Daily reflection offered by Prairie staff. Participate in services at local churches. Fee includes overnights/meals: $200

April 11: Nonviolent Action as Resistance
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
The workshop offers Gene Sharp’s work on nonviolence…moving from dictatorship to democracy. Three key points: hierarchical institutions depend on the obedience of the governed; obedience is voluntary; if enough of the governed resist for a long enough period of time, the structure changes or falls. Fee: $20

April 17: Easter Come to the Quiet
9:30 am – 3:30 pm
Where do you look for the Risen Jesus? Come to the Prairie to find him. The day is yours to shape as you will after a brief introduction into being resurrection people. Fee: $20

Or come for a personal day of quiet at the Prairie. Kathleen Storms, SSND is available for Spiritual Direction. Call to set up an appointment: 563-374-1092.

HUMILITY OF MARY CENTER, DAVENPORT
“Spirituality for Those Who Care for Earth” Presented by Father John Surette, SJ
Saturday, March 10, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Humility of Mary Center
Can we experience our concern for the fate of our Planet as a sacred concern? Open to all, and especially those who are hungry to deepen the spiritual dimension of their environmental concerns and actions. This includes time for discussion and homemade refreshments. Cost is free. Fr. Surette recently published *The Divine Dynamic*, a book of reflections on the relationship between humans, the Earth, and the creative power of the Universe. In it he challenges the way we think about God, the planet of which we are a part, and the way we relate to one another. Bursting with eco-theology and a thirst for universal justice, the text is rightly dedicated to Thomas Berry, the author’s “mentor, inspiration and friend.” Fr. John Surette is a member of the New England Province of Jesuits. For over 50 years he has been a chemistry teacher, religious educator and community organizer. He worked a long time in the Caribbean and now is based in Illinois where he is involved in eco-spirituality and eco-justice groups.

**BENET HOUSE RETREAT CENTER, ROCK ISLAND, IL**
All events held at Benet House Retreat Center, 2200 88th Avenue West, Rock Island, IL 61201-7649. To register contact Sr. Jackie Walsh at 309-283-2108 or retreats@smmsisters.org.

The Word Among Us: Read, reflect, pray and share with other committed Christians seeking to grow in reflecting on the challenges of Scripture for everyday life. We share a new book each month. Presenter: Sr. Charlotte Sonneville, OSB; Mondays each month, March 5 & 19, 7-8:30 p.m. Fee: $5/session + cost of books or $50 for series + cost of books.

Why Do We Suffer?: March 10, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Join us as we look at the whys and ways of suffering in the Bible and in Catholic tradition, including such figures as Pope Gregory the Great and Edith Stein. We will examine questions such as: “Why is suffering necessary? What good comes from suffering? Does God suffer?” There will be time for small group sharing, prayer and journaling, Scripture study and Lectio Divina. Presenter: Hal Green, PhD, author; former pastor; therapist, and certified teacher of Centering Prayer. Fee: $30 (incl. lunch).

The Mystic Within: March 24, 9 a.m. – Noon. Ordinary people, you and I, can be mystics. In fact, all of us are called to be in union with the Spirit of God (“I am in my Father and you in me and I in you.” John 14:20). Spend a morning reflecting on who the mystics are and what characterizes their lives. Learn prayer practices that will provide you with quiet and deeper insight into the Presence of God everywhere. There will be time for reflection, discussion, prayer and silence. Presenters: Sr. Catherine Cleary, OSB, and Sr. Helen Carey, OSB. Fee: $15, plus an option for lunch $7.50.

**EAGLES’ WINGS COUNSELING AND RETREAT CENTERS, DAVENPORT**
To register or for questions contact Marcia Moore, marcia@eagleswings.ws or 563-324-7263, http://www.eagleswings.ws. Located at 5816 Telegraph Rd., Davenport.

March Mad Hatter Tea Party: Saturday, March 17, 3 p.m. Women are invited to an afternoon of fun. Bring your favorite tea cup and a package of your favorite tea to share. Bring a ‘Mad Hat’ – use your imagination, bring a hat and make it fun. You are welcome to bring decorations to decorate your hat. Or come and model your hat.

Ignatian Prayer Group: Four weeks beginning March 14, 7 – 8:30 p.m. Directed by spiritual director, Marcia Moore. St. Ignatius left the church with a rich deposit in his method of praying with Scripture and discerning life decisions. His rock solid teachings have been in the church for over 500 years! The group will meet each week for a brief lesson, sharing spiritual insights as received through Scripture meditation and an assignment for daily prayer meditations for the following week. If you are looking for a way to continue to grow spiritually, especially during the Lenten season, and have 20 to 30 minutes to spend in prayer daily, please join us. Registration for the four weeks is $45.

**SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS, CLINTON**
For more information, call 563-242-7611 or visit www.clintonfranciscans.com.

Lenten Vespers: March 4, 11, 18, and 25, and April 1. Evening prayer with the Clinton Franciscans beginning at 6 pm every Sunday in Lent at The Canticle.

and discovering ways to live peace where there is no peace. Visit www.clintonfranciscans.com for details. Call 563-242-7611 to register. Advance registration required.

**Peace Soup:** A Lenten series of community and discussion at St. Boniface Hall, 2520 Pershing Boulevard, Clinton, on the Wednesdays of Lent, beginning at 6:00 pm. Join Jesus Christ Prince of Peace Parish Pax Christi for a simple Lenten supper of homemade soup and bread followed by a presentation and discussion on active nonviolence in today’s sometimes violent world.

- **March 7** – “A Justice That Heals” – What is the right thing to do when one young person kills another? This one-hour documentary explores the aftermath of a senseless murder in Evanston, IL and the priest who served the murderer’s parish.
- **March 14** – “A Force More Powerful” – We will view a segment of this Emmy-nominated PBS documentary about cases when nonviolence overcame oppression and authoritarian rule.
- **March 21** – “Peace in Every Step” - A film about leading Vietnamese Zen teacher and author Thich Nhat Hanh who shows how everyday personal peace relates to peace on earth. Our special guest will be Steve Spring of the Quad Cities, who has attended retreats at Thich Nhat Hahn’s “Plum Village” in France.
- **April 13** – Engaging in Nonviolent Demonstrations – Mike Gayman of Davenport and Lee Mickey of North Liberty share their experiences of engaging in civil disobedience at the School of the Americas combat training facility.

**SHALOM RETREAT CENTER, DUBUQUE**
To register call 563-582-3592 or send check payable to Shalom Retreat Center with your contact information to: 1001 Davis St., Dubuque, IA 52001. www.shalomretreats.org, info@shalomretreats.org

**Courageous Women of Faith: A Lenten Retreat Day for Women**
Thursday, Mar. 8, 9:00am – 3:00pm
Join us to learn about scriptural women and to reflect on our own lives as courageous women of faith. Presenter Mary Pedersen, D. Min, incorporates everyday life experiences into her dynamic presentations.
Offering: $40. Includes 8:30am cont. breakfast & lunch. Register by Mar. 5.

“**Can You Drink This Cup?” Retreat Day**
Saturday, Mar. 17, 9:30am – 3:30pm
Presenter: Fr. Jim Starbuck
Suffering involves the virtues of courage leading to compassion, which ultimately leads to Christ.

**Concert — Take Back the Light**
Friday, March 23 7:00 – 9:00pm
Jan Phillips - gifted musician, dynamic speaker & author
An evening of music, video and storytelling to celebrate our community, our collective potential and our creativity.
Offering: $17.50, if registered/paid by Mar. 21, after Mar. 21: $20.

**Concert & Workshop**
**The WORD, The IMAGE, The STORY: Tools of Transformation**
Friday, March 23, 7:00pm – Sunday, March 25, 1:00pm
Jan Phillips - gifted musician, dynamic speaker & author
In this multi-sensory, multi-media workshop, we’ll be using music, poetry, story and video to help us access our unique wisdom and find new ways to share it personally and professionally.
*Concert / Workshop Offering: $160  Commuter: $130. $50 nonrefundable deposit secures reservation.*

To support the ministry of your parish, school and the diocese these groups automatically receive the **Mini-Messenger**:

- Deacons
- Diocesan Corporate Board
- Youth Ministers
- Pastoral Associates
- Directors/Coordinators of Faith Formation
- Parishes
- Catholic Foundation Board
- Sisters
- RCIA Parish Contacts
- Diocesan Liturgical Commission
- Priests
- Parish Lay Directors
- Bookkeepers
- Diocesan Board of Education
- Diocesan Planning Commission
- Seminarians
- Diocesan Pastoral Council
- Principals

Other interested persons are welcome to subscribe. If you have questions regarding your subscription contact Laurie Hoefling, hoefling@davenportdiocese.org
Our nation faces political challenges that demand urgent moral choices. We are a nation at war, with all of its human costs; a country often divided by race and ethnicity; a nation of immigrants struggling with immigration. We are an affluent society where too many live in poverty; a culture built on families, where some now question the value of marriage and family life. We pride ourselves on supporting human rights, but we fail even to protect the fundamental right to life, especially for unborn children.

We bishops seek to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with the truth, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges. We do not tell Catholics how to vote. The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.

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. Faith helps us see more clearly the truth about human life and dignity that we also understand through human reason. 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). According to Pope Benedict XVI, “charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as ‘social charity’” (Encyclical Deus Caritas Est, no. 29).

The United States Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to participate and speak out without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church’s right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning our central 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 the political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience 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 a 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. 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 matters that affect their lives and the common good.

How Does the Church Help Catholics to Address Political and Social Questions?

A Well-Formed Conscience

The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. “Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

The Virtue of Prudence

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us “to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. A good end does not justify an immoral means. At times Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build through moral means a more just and peaceful world.

Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.

Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support. Yet a candidate’s position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As Pope John Paul II said, “the fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment” (Encyclical Veritatis Splendor, no. 52).

The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work. The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.
Making Moral Choices
Difficult political decisions require the exercise of a well-formed conscience aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection. “Those who formulate law therefore have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good” (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], Catholics in Political Life).

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Evangelium Vitae, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When Church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

What Does the Church Say About Catholic Social Teaching in the Public Square?—Seven Key Themes
A consistent ethic of life should guide all Catholic engagement in political life. This Catholic ethic neither treats all issues as morally equivalent nor reduces 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 themes of Catholic social teaching provide a moral framework for decisions in public life.

The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person
Human life is sacred. Direct attacks on innocent human beings are never morally acceptable. Within our society, life is under direct attack from abortion, euthanasia, human cloning, and destruction of human embryos for research. These intrinsic evils must always be opposed. This teaching also compels us as Catholics to oppose genocide, torture, unjust war, and the use of the death penalty, as well as to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation
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.

Rights and Responsibilities
Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible. Each of us has a right to religious freedom, which enables us to live and act in accord with our God-given dignity, as well as a right to 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 one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor and marginalized.

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, opportunities for legal status 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.

Solidarity
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.

Caring for God’s Creation
Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. 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.

Conclusion
In light of Catholic teaching, as bishops we vigorously repeat our call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the defense of life, the needs of the weak, and the pursuit of the common good. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

Notes
2. These themes 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). For more information on these seven themes, see www.faithfulcitizenship.org. For information on how we bishops of the United States have applied Catholic social teaching to policy issues, see www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

For a wide range of educational and other resources to help share Faithful Citizenship, go to www.faithfulcitizenship.org.
El reto de formar la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles

Este breve documento es un resumen de la reflexión de los obispos de Estados Unidos titulada Formando la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles. Complementa la enseñanza de los obispos en sus diócesis y estados. Existe a su disposición una versión de este documento en letra grande en faithfulcitizenship.org.

Nuestra nación afronta unos retos que requieren decisiones morales urgentes. Somos una nación en guerra, con todo el costo humano que conlleva; un país a menudo dividido por las razas y etnias; una nación de inmigrantes que tiene dificultades con la inmigración. Somos una sociedad opulenta donde demasiadas personas viven en la pobreza; somos parte de una comunidad global que está enfrentando al terrorismo y se enfrenta a amenazas urgentes contra el medio ambiente; tenemos una cultura cimentada sobre las familias, en la que algunos ahora cuestionan el valor del matrimonio y la vida familiar. Nos sentimos orgullosos de apoyar los derechos humanos, pero hallamos incluso a la hora de proteger el derecho fundamental a la vida, especialmente el de los niños no nacidos.

Nosotros, los obispos, buscamos ayudar a los católicos a formar su conciencia de acuerdo con la verdad, de manera que puedan tomar decisiones morales sólidas cuando respondan a estos retos. No decimos a los católicos cómo deben votar. La responsabilidad de tomar decisiones políticas recae en cada persona y en su conciencia correctamente formada.

¿Por qué enseña la Iglesia sobre cuestiones que afectan a la política pública?

La obligación de la Iglesia de participar en la formación del carácter moral de la sociedad es un requisito de nuestra fe, parte de la misión encomendada a nosotros por Jesucristo. La fe nos ayuda a ver más claramente la verdad sobre la vida y dignidad humanas, la cual también comprendemos mediante la razón humana. Como personas tanto de fe como seres racionales que somos, los católicos están llamados a llevar la verdad a la vida política y a practicar el mandamiento de Cristo, quien nos mandó “que se amen los unos a los otros” (Jn 13:34). Según el Papa Benedicto XVI: “La caridad debe animar toda la existencia de los fieles laicos y, por tanto, su actividad política, vivida como ‘caridad social’” (carta encíclica Deus Caritas Est, no. 29).

La Constitución de Estados Unidos protege el derecho de los creyentes individuales y de las instituciones religiosas a participar y decir lo que piensan sin interferencias gubernamentales, favoritismos o discriminación. La ley civil debería reconocer y proteger el derecho y la responsabilidad de la Iglesia a participar en la sociedad sin tener que abandonar nuestras convicciones morales. La tradición pluralista de nuestra nación es enriquecida, y no amenazada, cuando los grupos religiosos y las personas de fe llevan sus convicciones a la vida pública. La comunidad católica aporta al diálogo político un marco moral coherentemente y una amplia experiencia de servicio a los necesitados.

¿Quién en la Iglesia debería participar en la vida política?

En la Tradición católica, ser ciudadanos responsables es una virtud y la participación en la vida política es una obligación moral. Como católicos deberíamos ser guiados más por nuestras convicciones morales que por nuestro apego a un partido político o grupo con intereses especiales. En el ambiente socio-político de hoy en día, los católicos pueden sentirse desamparados políticamente, percibiendo que ningún partido político y muy pocos candidatos comparten nuestro compromiso exhaustivo con la vida y dignidad humanas. Los laicos católicos necesitan actuar según los principios morales de la Iglesia e involucrarse más presentándose como candidatos, trabajando dentro de partidos políticos y transmitiendo sus preocupaciones a quienes ocupan funciones públicas. Incluso quienes no pueden votar tienen que alzar sus voces respecto a cuestiones que afectan su vida y el bien común.

¿Cómo ayuda la Iglesia a los católicos a tratar las cuestiones políticas y sociales?

Una conciencia bien formada

La Iglesia provee a sus miembros con lo necesario para tratar cuestiones políticas y sociales al ayudarlos a desarrollar una conciencia bien formada.

“La conciencia moral es un juicio de la razón por el que la persona humana reconoce la cualidad moral de un acto concreto... [cada persona] está obligada[a] a seguir fielmente lo que sabe que es justo y recto” (Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica [CIC], no. 1778). Durante toda nuestra vida, nosotros, los católicos, tenemos la obligación de formar nuestra conciencia de acuerdo con la razón humana, iluminada por la enseñanza de Cristo que llega a nosotros por medio de la Iglesia.

La virtud de la prudencia

La Iglesia también anima a los católicos a desarrollar la virtud de la prudencia, la cual nos permite “discernir en toda circunstancia nuestro verdadero bien y a elegir los medios rectos para realizarlo” (CIC, no. 1806). La prudencia forma e informa nuestra capacidad para deliberar sobre las alternativas disponibles, identificar cual es la más adecuada en un contexto específico y actuar. La prudencia debe estar acompañada de valentía, que es la que nos llama a actuar. Ya que los católicos buscamos promover el bien común, debemos discernir cuidadosamente qué políticas públicas son moralmente sólidas. Un buen fin no justifica un medio inmoral. A veces los católicos pueden elegir diferentes maneras de responder a problemas sociales, pero no podemos alejarnos de nuestra obligación de proteger la vida y dignidad humanas, y de ayudar a construir con medios morales un mundo más justo y pacífico.

Hacer el bien y evitar el mal

Existen algunas acciones que nunca debemos realizar, ni como individuos ni como sociedad, porque estas son siempre incompatibles con el amor a Dios y al prójimo. Estos actos intrínsecamente malos siempre deben ser rechazados y nunca se deben apoyar. Un ejemplo claro es quitar intencionadamente la vida de un ser humano inocente por medio del aborto. Un sistema legal que permite que el derecho a la vida sea violado, fundado en que este derecho es opcional, es un sistema fundamentalmente defectuoso. Asimismo, las amenazas directas a la dignidad de la vida humana, como los asaltos a la vida y dignidad humanas, como el genocidio, la tortura, el racismo, el tráfico humano, el costo humano y moral de la guerra, jamás pueden ser justificados. La falta de respeto hacia cualquier vida humana devalúa el respeto hacia toda vida humana.

Como católicos no votamos basándonos en una sola cuestión. La posición de un candidato respecto a una sola cuestión no es suficiente para garantizar el apoyo del votante. Sin embargo, la posición de un candidato respecto a una sola cuestión relacionada con un mal intrínseco, como es el aborto legal o la promoción del racisme, puede llevar legítimamente al votante a descalificar a un candidato a no recibir su apoyo.1

Oponerse a actos intrínsecamente malos debería también ayudarnos a reconocer que tenemos un deber positivo de contribuir al bien común y de actuar solidariamente con los necesitados. Es esencial tanto oponerse al mal como hacer el bien. Como dijo el Papa Juan Pablo II: “El hecho de que solamente los mandamientos negativos obliguen siempre y en toda circunstancia, no significa que, en la vida moral, las prohibiciones sean más importantes que el compromiso de hacer el bien, como indican los mandamientos positivos” (carta encíclica Veritatis Splendor, no. 52). El derecho fundamental a la vida implica y está ligado a otros derechos humanos, a los bienes fundamentales que toda persona humana necesita para vivir y desarrollarse plenamente, incluidos el alimento, la vivienda, el cuidado médico, la educación y el trabajo digno. El uso de la pena de muerte, el hambre, la falta de cuidado médico o vivienda, el tráfico humano, el costo humano y moral de la guerra y las políticas de inmigración injustas son algunas de las cuestiones morales serias que retan a nuestra conciencia y requieren que actuemos.

Tomar decisiones morales

Las decisiones políticas difíciles requieren del ejercicio de una conciencia bien formada apoyada por la prudencia. Este ejercicio de la conciencia comienza...
informar la conciencia y guiar las acciones de los católicos. Cuando ya existan leyes moralmente defectuosas, se necesita un juicio prudente para determinar cómo hacer lo posible para restaurar la justicia —incluso si es solo parcial o gradualmente— sin tener nunca que abandonar un compromiso moral de proteger totalmente toda vida humana, desde la concepción hasta su muerte natural (véase Papa Juan Pablo II, carta encíclica Evangelium Vitae, no. 73).

También se necesita de un juicio prudente para determinar cuál es la mejor manera de promover el bien común en áreas como la vivienda, el cuidado médico y la inmigración. Cuando los líderes de la Iglesia deciden cómo aplicar la doctrina católica a políticas específicas, aún no teniendo la misma autoridad vinculante que los principios morales universales, esta no puede ser desechada simplemente como otra opción política. Estas aplicaciones morales deberían informar la conciencia y guiar las acciones de los católicos.

¿Qué dice la Iglesia sobre la doctrina social católica en el ámbito público? — Siete temas clave

La ética consistente sobre la vida debería guiar a todos los católicos en su participación en la vida política. Esta ética católica ni trata a todas las cuestiones como equivalentes moralmente ni reduce la doctrina católica a una u dos cuestiones. La ética consistente sobre la vida ancla el compromiso católico de defender la vida humana, desde la concepción hasta la muerte natural, a la obligación moral fundamental de respetar la dignidad de cada persona como hijo o hija de Dios.

Los votantes católicos deberían usar la doctrina católica para examinar las posiciones de los candidatos respecto a las cuestiones y deberían considerar la integridad, la filosofía y el desempeño de actuar de los candidatos. Es importante para todos los ciudadanos que “vayan más allá de la política partidista, que analicen las promesas de las campañas con un ojo crítico y que escojan sus dirigentes políticos según su principio, no su afiliación política o el interés propio” (USCCB, Vivir el Evangelio de la vida, no. 34). Los siguientes temas de la doctrina social católica ofrecen un marco moral para tomar decisiones en la vida pública.

La vida y la dignidad de la persona

La vida humana es sagrada. Los ataques directos contra los seres humanos inocentes nunca son moralmente aceptables. En nuestra sociedad, la vida humana está bajo el ataque directo del aborto, la eutanasia, la clonación humana y la destrucción de embriones humanos para la investigación científica. Estos males intrínsecos deben ser siempre rechazados. Esta enseñanza también nos obliga como católicos a oponernos al genocidio, a la tortura, a la guerra injusta y al uso de la pena de muerte, así como a buscar la paz y ayudar a erradicar la pobreza, el racismo y otras condiciones que devaluén la vida humana.

El llamado a la familia, a la comunidad y a la participación

La familia, basada en el matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer, es la unidad fundamental de la sociedad. Este santuario para la creación y la crianza de hijos debe ser redefinido, socavado o ignorado. Apoyar a las familias debería ser una prioridad en las políticas económicas sociales. La economía debe estar al servicio de las personas, y no al contrario. La dignidad del trabajo y los derechos de los trabajadores

La economía debe estar al servicio de las personas, y no al contrario. La justicia económica pide un puesto de trabajo decente con un salario justo, oportunidades para los trabajadores inmigrantes de estar en situación legal y la oportunidad de todas las personas de trabajar por el bien común por medio de su trabajo, de la propiedad, la iniciativa, las inversiones, la participación en sindicatos y otras formas de actividad económica.

La solidaridad

Somos una sola familia humana, independientemente de nuestras diferencias nacionales, raciales, étnicas, económicas e ideológicas. Nuestro compromiso católico a la solidaridad requiere que busquemos la justicia, eliminemos el racismo, pongamos fin al tráfico humano, protejamos los derechos humanos, busquemos la paz y evitemos el uso de la fuerza excepto cuando este sea el último recurso.

El cuidado por la creación de Dios

El cuidado del planeta es un deber de nuestra fe católica. Estamos llamados a ser administradores cuidadosos de la creación de Dios y a asegurar un ambiente seguros y hospitalarios para los seres humanos más vulnerables, hoy y en el futuro.

Conclusión

A la luz de la doctrina católica, nosotros, como obispos, repetimos vigorosamente nuestro llamado a una política renovada enfocada en principio morales, en la defensa de la vida, las necesidades de los más débiles y la búsqueda del bien común. Esta clase de participación política refleja la doctrina social de nuestra Iglesia y las mejores tradiciones de nuestra nación.

Notas


2. Estos temas han sido tomados de una rica tradición de principios e ideas descritos en mayor profundidad en el Compendio de la doctrina social de la Iglesia del Pontificio Consejo “Justicia y Paz” (Bogotá, Colombia: CELAM, 2006). Para más información sobre estos siete temas, visite www.faithfulcitizenship.org. Para información sobre cómo los obispos de Estados Unidos han aplicado la doctrina social católica a cuestiones políticas, visite www.faithfulcitizenship.org.

El documento El reto de formar la conciencia para ser ciudadanos fieles fue elaborado por los presidentes, en consulta con los miembros, de los siguientes comités de la Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB, por su sigla en inglés]): Comités de Política Doméstica, Política Internacional, Actividades Pro-Vida, Comunicaciones, Doctrina, Educación y Migración. El documento fue aprobado por el pleno de los obispos durante su reunión general de noviembre de 2007 y ha sido autorizado para su publicación por el abaj firmante.

Mons. David J. Malloy, STD
Secretario general, USCCB


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New standards, certification process will “raise the bar on professionalism,” says IlaMae

Last October, the Committee on Certification and Accreditation of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the revised National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers.

The revised standards are part of a “brand new certification process,” reports IlaMae Hanisch, who says the new standards will strengthen ministry formation programs and guide more people into employment opportunities in the Church.

“It now includes liturgists,” IlaMae points out, as well as “youth ministers, teachers, editors and others” who are called to ministry.

“Some of the categories are the same as seminary and diaconate formation.”

The new standards set core competencies in these areas: personal and spiritual maturity; call to ministry; Roman Catholic theology; pastoral praxis; and professional practice. The standards define a Lay Ecclesial Minister as someone who recognizes his or her call to formal and public ministry as a vocation rooted in baptism. LEMs engage in pastoral activities that promote evangelization, faith formation, community and pastoral care. They provide effective leadership, administration and service in the spirit of collaboration, according to the new standards. National certification is available to Lay Ecclesial Ministers serving in the following roles: Director of Worship; Parish Life Coordinator; Pastoral Associate; Director of Music Ministries; Parish Catechetical Leader; and Youth Ministry Leader, and include Spanish-speaking leaders.

“It raises the bar for professionalism” in Church ministry, IlaMae says of the new standards and certification, both of which are now accessible online at: www.lemcertification.org.

“I hope we will see people from our diocese applying for national certification,” she adds.
Newly commissioned Lay Ecclesial Ministers posed for a formal group photograph October 1, 2011. Pictured are: (back row, left to right) Francisco Rivas, Lowell Van Wyk, James Connell, Karl Lantzky, Joe Rohret, Rhonda Versluyts; (third row) Matt McAndrew, Alicia Rivas, Donna DeJoode, Tammy Norcross, Marybeth Wagner, Angela Gritsch, Tracey Jacobsen, Ann Mohr; (Second row) Jose Duran, Margarita Marquez, David Rolling, Jane Kamerick, Kathy Brack, Robin Brierly, Bishop Martin Amos; (front row) Pablo Pena, Refugio Ceniceros, Marcos MaJarro, Mario DeLion, Maria Duran, IliaMae Hanisch (program coordinator). Karol Salgado and Mark Comer were not pictured.

This collection of essays builds on the U.S. bishops’ document Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, now considered a vital resource for the ongoing development of lay ecclesial ministry.

“This collection of essays builds on the U.S. bishops’ document Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord, now considered a vital resource for the ongoing development of lay ecclesial ministry. Reflections on Renewal contributes to efforts to reshape ministerial language and practices in the church today,” according to information on the back cover.

The book “explores the theological and pastoral foundations of ministry, including how all ministry is rooted in the sacraments of initiation, and suggests ways of refining or redefining our understandings of lay ecclesial and ordained ministries so that we as church can respond more fully to the call of God in our lives and world.” The book also “recognizes that lay ministry developed organically as the work of the Spirit and is, foremost, a cause for rejoicing.”

Authors Donna M. Eschenauer and Harold Daly Horell said they wrote the book “to honor the thousands of lay-people who have answered a call to serve the church in ministry.”

Features noted writer and lecturer Father Ron Rolheiser, president of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. The conference will explore the deep inner dynamics of faith and how to work at sustaining a genuine faith. $25 fee includes breakfast, lunch and materials. The day begins with coffee and rolls at 9 a.m. and concludes at 3:30 p.m. To register, contact Barbara Butterworth at (563) 888-4240 or email: butterworthb@davenportdiocese.org

Register before April 2, 2012
www.davenportdiocese.org/faithform

“ We live with a deep secret that sometimes we know, and then not!”
—Fr. Ron Rolheiser

Faith Formation Conference with Father Ron Rolheiser coming to eastern Iowa April 14th

Good read for LEMs: Reflections on Renewal; Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Church by Donna Eschenauer and Harold Daly Horell

Reflections on Renewal; Lay Ecclesial Ministry paperback, $19.95.