



December 2012

Office for Social Concerns

Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Latest Updates

December 8 – Night of Prayer for Life

The 23rd annual National Night of Prayer for Life will be on December 8, 2012. This night of prayer links the feast days of the Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas and the unborn. Catholics across the country will pray in unity in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the holy Rosary, prayer to St. Michael, silent prayer and hymns. Prayer is encouraged from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. with a national hour of unity from 12 a.m. to 1 a.m.

December 25 – Catholic Charities Collection

The annual collection for diocesan Catholic Charities will be taken up on Christmas. This collection allows the diocese to meet a variety of basic needs directly and through diocesan agencies and organizations including J.O.I.N. (Joint Organization for Inner-City Needs), St. Stephen's Community House, Catholic Social Services, St. Francis Center, St. Lawrence Haven, St. Vincent Family Center, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society. You can help share in this important work by generously supporting the Catholic Charities collection this year.

January is "Poverty in America Awareness Month"

More than 46 million Americans live in Poverty USA. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) designated January as "Poverty in America Awareness Month." In January, we devote our efforts to heightening the nation's understanding of the scope of the problems of poverty and work to break the cycle. For more details, go to www.povertyusa.org.

*Blessed are the
peacemakers.*

2013 World Day of Peace Message

January 1 -- World Day of Peace

The Vatican has announced the theme and title for the annual World Day of Peace message that Pope Benedict XVI will release on January 1: "Blessed are the peacemakers." In his 2013 Message for World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that we all have a role to play in building peace in our communities and world. His 2013 message focuses on human dignity, rights and responsibilities, as well as the fiftieth anniversary of John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris*. For more information, visit www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/world-day-of-peace.cfm or contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

January 6-12 – National Migration Week

"We are Strangers No Longer: Our Journey of Hope Continues" is the theme for National Migration Week, January 6-12, 2013. This theme reminds us of our responsibility to help newcomers integrate in ways that are respectful, culturally sensitive and responsive to social needs, and of the ongoing need for comprehensive immigration reform. For resources, visit the U.S. Bishops' NMW website at www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services/national-migration-week or call the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

January 11 -- Urban Plunge Reception - University of Notre Dame Alumni

Alumni of the University of Notre Dame are invited to the Urban Plunge reception on Friday, January 11, 2013. The reception marks the conclusion of the 48-hour Urban Plunge in Columbus for ND students. Students who participate in this inner-city immersion experience visit the homeless, feed the hungry, and volunteer at local Catholic charities. ND Alumni are invited to a 5:15 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral, Columbus, and reception following Mass at the Catholic Center, 197 E. Gay Street, Columbus. The Columbus Urban Plunge is annual program coordinated by the diocesan Office for Social Concerns and the ND Alumni Club of Columbus. For details, call (614) 241-2540.

January 15-22 – Stand Against Violence Week

In 1994, the U.S. Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter entitled “Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action.” As a response to the pastoral letter parishes and dioceses across the United States gave focus to peacemaking and policy efforts against violence from January 15th, the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and January 22, the anniversary of the tragic *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing the violence of abortion. To learn more about diocesan efforts against domestic violence, gun violence, and other threats to the dignity of the human person, please contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.

January 22 – Respect Life Mass – Day of Penance and Prayer

At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 22, 2013, Bishop Frederick Campbell will be celebrant at Mass at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad Street, Columbus, in observance of the “day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life.” This day of penance and prayer falls near the anniversary of the January 22, 1973, U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. All are invited to attend. For more

information about the Church’s teaching on pro-life issues, visit the U.S. Bishops’ website at www.usccb.org/prolife.

January 22 – Rally for Life

The annual Rally for Life will be on Monday, January 22, 2013, Noon at the Statehouse west plaza, Columbus. The rally is open to all ages. For more information, contact Columbus Right to Life at (614) 445-8508.

February 10-13 – Catholic Social Ministry Gathering

The USCCB Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, held on February 10-13, 2013 in Washington, DC, is the annual meeting of social justice ministry leaders from national Catholic organizations and dioceses throughout the nation. The meeting includes inspiring prayer and worship, speakers, and social ministry strategy sessions. In addition, participants receive detailed briefings on priority justice and peace issues. A highlight of the meeting is bringing a common Catholic message of concern for the poor and vulnerable to members of Congress on Capitol Hill. For more information, visit the USCCB Catholic Social Ministry website at www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/catholic-social-ministry-gathering/index.cfm or call the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540.



CRS Rice Bowl: For Lent, For Life

Pope Benedict XVI has declared this year “The Year of Faith.” It is an intentional time for Catholics to deepen our faith in Christ. This Lent, the invitation is to focus on how to enhance, renew, and develop our relationships with Jesus. The CRS Rice Bowl is a way to encounter Jesus through others, especially the most vulnerable around the world. Expressing love for those in need expands our hearts in hope. The CRS Rice Bowl is a Lenten faith formation program for use in parishes, schools, religious education programs and by families and individuals in the home. Using CRS Rice Bowl materials, participants prepare to celebrate Christ’s resurrection by reflecting and acting on His mission of Love for

those in need. They **pray** together; give things up, or **fast**, in solidarity with those who hunger; **learn** about our global community and the challenges of hunger and poverty around the world; and **give** sacrificial donations to those in need. CRS Rice Bowl ensures that the Catholic community of the United States is present in nearly 100 countries worldwide, serving the poorest among us through Catholic Relief Services. For more information, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns, 614-241-2540 or socmailbox@colsdio.org or the CRS website at www.crsricebowl.org.

March – Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

The National Catholic Partnership on Disability (NCPD) facilitates the implementation of the Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on People with

Disabilities by calling for inclusion of people with disabilities in the life of the church and the community. Visit www.ncpd.org for resources.

March 29 – Good Friday – Walking Stations of the Cross

The many facets of faith and justice will be the focus of the annual Walking Stations of the Cross. The walk begins with an opening prayer at St. Joseph Cathedral, 212 E. Broad Street, Columbus, at 8 a.m., Friday, March 29, 2013. Participants will stop at locations in downtown Columbus to recognize Jesus Christ's suffering and crucifixion as well as reflect on a current area of social concern. For more information, contact the diocesan Office for Social Concerns at (614) 241-2540 or the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at (614) 241-2565.

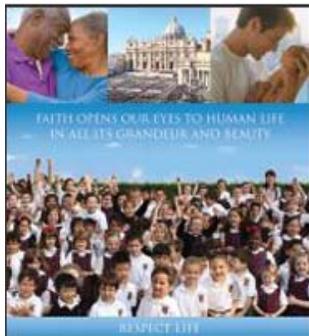
Resources

For additional resources visit www.socialconcerns.colsdio.org.



First American Freedom

The U.S. Catholic bishops continue to address serious concerns about threats to religious liberty and conscience protection. Recently, USCCB launched a new website at www.firstamericanfreedom.com. The latest updates, prayer resources, educational materials, and action alerts are available online www.socialconcerns.colsdio.org.



Respect Life Program

The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities publishes a program packet each year to call attention to numerous human life issues. These materials are especially helpful for priests, parish groups and other organizations. For online Respect Life Program packets, clip art, free bulletin inserts and more information for your parish go to www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/index.cfm.

Poverty USA

More than 46 million Americans live in Poverty USA. Americans families were having a difficult time making ends meet before the recession. With continuing unemployment and increasing costs of living, more and more families have to choose between necessities like health care, child care, and even food. Visit the Poverty USA website at www.povertyusa.org. To learn about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, contact the diocesan CCHD Director at (614) 241-2540 or socmailbox@colsdio.org.





**CATHOLIC
MOBILIZING
NETWORK**
TO END THE USE OF
THE DEATH PENALTY

**Catholic Mobilizing Network
To End the Use of the Death Penalty**

Catholic Mobilizing Network (CMN) proclaims the Church's unconditional pro-life teaching and its application to capital punishment and restorative justice. Learn more about the people who make up this organization, recent and past news, as well as events, programs, and activities sponsored by CMN, go to <http://catholicismobilizing.org>.



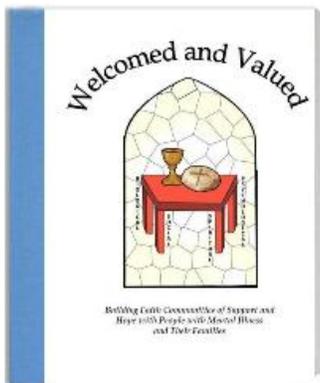
Care for Creation

The Catholic Conference of Ohio unveiled a new webpage on environmental justice entitled Care for Creation. It provides resources for families, parishes, schools, and other institutions. It includes perspectives on climate change, energy conservation, food & agriculture, hydraulic fracturing, fossil fuels, land use, and renewable energy. To view the resource, visit www.ohiocathconf.org/I/Envir/envir.htm.



Justice for Immigrants Campaign

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign seeks to educate the public, especially the Catholic community, including Catholic public officials, about Church teaching on migration and immigrants. Its ultimate goal is to achieve comprehensive immigration reform. The JFI website has education and advocacy tools to organize Catholic networks to assist in this effort. Visit the JFI website at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.



**Welcomed and Valued:
Mental Illness Resource Manual and DVD**

The Welcomed and Valued Resource Manual features 90+ pages of information, perspectives and tools to assist in the ministry with people with mental illness. The DVD features in depth looks at people with mental illness and how they participate in parish life. For these and other helpful resources, please visit the National Catholic Partnership on Disability's website at www.ncpd.org/ministries-programs/specific/mentalillness.

Action Alerts

For current legislative action alerts visit www.socialconcerns.colsdioc.org.

Pass the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act

Source: National Committee for a Human Life Amendment

On August 1, the Obama Administration's contraceptive and sterilization mandate went into effect. Congress must take action now to protect religious liberty and conscience rights. Contact your Representative and two Senators. Urge Members to support and work for enactment of the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467) this year, whether as a free-standing bill or as part of other legislation.

Recommended Actions:

- Send an e-mail through NCHLA's Grassroots Action Center: www.nchla.org.
- Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Members' local offices. Additional contact info can be found on Members' web sites at: www.senate.gov and www.house.gov.
- Ask Members to support enactment of the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act *this* year.
- Since Members monitor local media closely, write letters to the editor, especially in response to articles or editorials, and participate in radio or TV call-in shows.

Suggested Message:

"Please support and work for enactment of the Respect for Rights of Conscience Act (H.R. 1179, S. 1467) this year. By amending the new health care law, this measure will ensure respect for conscience rights in the face of the Administration's contraceptive mandate that went into effect for most employers August 1. The mandate forces health plans to cover sterilization and contraceptives, including drugs that can cause an abortion, even when employers and employees have moral or religious objections."

For the latest updates, prayer resources, educational materials, and action alerts related to Religious Liberty and Conscience Protection, please visit the diocesan Office for Social Concerns' website at www.socialconcerns.colsdioc.org.

Urge Public Officials to End the Use of the Death Penalty in Ohio.

The State of Ohio scheduled eleven executions through October 2014. Two bills to replace the death penalty with life without parole were introduced in the 129th Ohio General Assembly but expire by the end of this legislative session. Meanwhile, the Ohio Supreme Court's Joint Task Force to Review the Administration of Ohio's Death Penalty continues to meet. In the statement "A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death," the U.S. Catholic Bishops state, "We seek to help build a culture of life in which our nation will no longer try to teach that killing is wrong by killing those who kill. This cycle of violence diminishes us all." You are encouraged to contact members of the Ohio General Assembly and the Governor and urge them to end the use of the death penalty in Ohio.

For more information on the Church's teaching on the death penalty, visit the Catholic Conference of Ohio's death penalty webpage at www.ohiocathconf.org/1/DP/deathpenalty.htm.

Farm Bill Update

Source: National Catholic Rural Life Conference

Members of Congress are back to legislative work after the Thanksgiving recess. Fiscal decisions for the coming year are most urgent, but Congress is also called to act on completing the 2012 Farm Bill. It seems unlikely they will be able to do so with the few days remaining on their legislative schedule.

We wish to thank again everyone who sent messages to Congress to complete a fair and just farm bill this year. If House leaders decide to delay a new farm bill by extending the old one, then we will still need to make sure important modifications and reforms are included.

For more information, including updates and alerts see the USCCB Farm Bill page at www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/agriculture-nutrition-rural-issues/farm-bill.cfm or visit the National Catholic Rural Life Conference's Farm Bill page at www.ncrlc.com/news.aspx?ID=287.

Responsible Deficit Reduction: Stand with People and Families Striving to Live in Dignity

Source: *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

In a November 13 letter, the chairmen of the USCCB Committees on Domestic Justice and Human Development and International Justice and Peace urged Congress to avoid measures that harm at-risk students, low-income families and people currently benefiting from poverty-focused international assistance, as Congress works to avoid sequestration and enact responsible deficit reduction.

Bishop Blaire also called on all Christians to "help our brothers and sisters who are hungry and living in poverty by providing food especially during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. It is also essential that we advocate for budgets and programs that serve the common good and help those living in poverty. The Christian path requires that we walk with both feet- the foot of charity and the foot of justice."

ACTION: Tell Members of Congress that programs serving working poor families must be protected from budget cuts. In discussing various deficit reduction proposals, programs that help families live in dignity should be strengthened.

For the latest letters and action alerts, visit www.usccb.org/jphd.

Ohio Budget Debate to Start in Early 2013

In early 2013, the Ohio Governor will release his proposed two-year state budget. The Ohio General Assembly will then work to pass a budget bill by the end of June. The Catholic Conference of Ohio will issue legislative action alerts related to the budget in the days to come. Your advocacy will be needed. Stay tuned.

Visit the Catholic Conference of Ohio's website at www.ohiocathconf.org for updates.



U.S. Bishops' Migration Chairman Urges President Obama and Congress to Enact Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of USCCB's Committee on Migration, urged President Barack Obama and the newly elected Congress to work together to enact comprehensive immigration reform. Archbishop Gomez issued the statement during the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Fall General Assembly, November 13 in Baltimore. "I urge the President and Congress to seize the moment and begin the challenging process of fashioning a bipartisan agreement," Archbishop Gomez said. "Millions of persons remain in the shadows, without legal protection and marginalized from society. As a moral matter, this suffering must end."

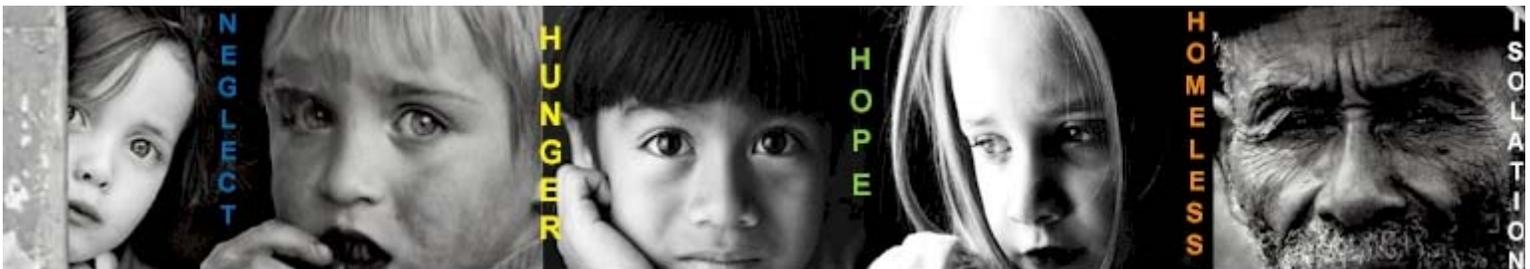
For more information and the latest action alert visit the U.S. Catholic Bishops' Justice for Immigrants Campaign at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

Domestic and International Issues

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops urge action on a number of domestic and international issues which include conscience protection and religious freedom, domestic and international poverty assistance programs, and deficit reduction discussions. To view policy positions and action alerts, visit www.usccb.org/jphd.

Information and Response Network

If you would like to receive legislative action alerts and upcoming events from the diocesan Office for Social Concerns via email, subscribe to the Information and Response Network. Please send an email to socmailbox@colsdio.org. Don't forget to visit our website at www.socialconcerns.colsdio.org.



Care Enough to Act

Pray • Volunteer • Donate
Support our Catholic Charities

Today offers an opportunity to rediscover in a personal way the call to love of neighbor, especially those in need. In addition to the parish based efforts and organizations that serve the poor and vulnerable, we have several diocesan sponsored agencies and organizations that respond to need and act in our name. Our diocesan Catholic Charities include Catholic Social Services, J.O.I.N., St. Francis Center in McArthur, St. Stephen's Community House, St. Vincent Family Centers, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Visit the website www.charities.colsdio.org for more information.