

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



10 WEST 71ST STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10023
212-877-3041
(FAX) 212-724-5923

WWW.CATHOLICDAUGHTERS.ORG

Quarterly Newsletter
March 2009

Dear Officers, Chaplains, and Members,

When you receive this letter we will be in the early days of the Season of Lent. It is a time for us to reflect on the blessed season of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus. When I was a child I thought as a child, and I was in the mindset that it was what I gave up for Lent that was important. As I grew older, I was taught that it was not so much what I gave up as much as what I gave during this season. The motto of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas "Unity and Charity" is what our organization is all about especially during the time of Lent. The Spirituality of our order is what will lead us closer to the Lord and his blessed Mother during this time.

Your State Convention should be well on its way. I hope your convention agenda provides time for spiritual, motivational, informational and fun activities. Conventions should be a time to learn, renew friendships, and make new friends. If you are delegate to the state convention, please go to the convention with an open heart and an open mind. May God guide and help you as you plan for this important state event. I wish you all very successful conventions.

STATE CONVENTIONS

The National Board thanks you for the many kind invitations to attend your State Conventions. As you are aware, we are not able to attend each one but one board member will be in attendance at your convention. Our sincere gratitude to the outgoing State Officers for your commitment to serve in this leadership position. Please continue to stay involved, as your experience is invaluable to our CDA organization. We wish the new State Boards continued success as you strive to fulfill the endeavors of our mission statement. We look forward to working with you and wish you the very best.

NATIONAL DUES

Courts which have not paid their National or State dues must make every effort to do so as soon as possible. A vote of the court is **not required** to pay State and National dues. If you have any outstanding invoices from National or State for dues, insurance or supplies that are not paid, you will not be eligible to vote at your State convention.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Local Financial Review form is enclosed, covering the period 10-1-08 through 3-31-09. Please return the original copy to the National Office **NO LATER THAN 5-1-09**, and make/forward copies for those listed on the bottom of the form. As you prepare your Financial Review, please keep in mind our National Projects and Programs.

2008 BYLAWS

The newly printed 2008 edition of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Bylaws are available from the National Office for \$2.50 each. Each Court Officer should have the latest edition of the Bylaws of our Order.

FUNDRAISER

Thank you all so much for your generous response to our recent fundraiser. The revenue will be of tremendous help to our charities and expenses.

MORALITY IN MEDIA

The collection of membership dues and donations to MIM through the National Office appears to be working well. A one-time annual court donation is sent directly to National Headquarters, and, in return, MIM receives one CDA check of support. Of course, if an individual in your court or the court itself wants to communicate directly with MIM, they may do so at any time.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

I am very pleased to note that the Catholic Daughters have supported a total of 24 homes throughout the United States, Philippines and Mexico. There are many local and state courts that continue to support and build homes in their areas. If your State has not had a Habitat Home built there yet, please contact our National Chairman Shirley Seyfried.

NATIONAL PROJECTS AND CHARITIES

We thank the Local and State Courts for their continued generosity to our National Projects and Charities. Have you sent your yearly donation yet? Enclosed for your reference is a guide listing the various projects and charities and addresses to which you may send your donations.

1903 SOCIETY

Is your **1903 Society Membership** expired? Donations should be sent to the National Office. The purpose of this Society is to ensure the preservation of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas National Headquarters, located in a Historic Landmark District of New York City. Membership Donations are: 1 year \$19.03-\$190.00; 5 year \$190.03-\$1900.00; Perpetual \$1903.00-\$.

LEGISLATION

Much was accomplished by the National Legislative Committee during a recent meeting held in conjunction with the annual March for Life activities in Washington, DC. Members of the Executive Committee joined the meeting and were pleased to take part in the discussion with Richard Doerflinger, Associate Director of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishop's Secretariat of Pro Life Activities. The National Board, some National Directors participated in the 36th Annual March for Life in Washington, DC and were pleased to walk with other state officers, local officers and members as one group. Thank you to all those other officers and members who walked with their parishes and diocese. They estimated more than 300,000 participated in the walk.

OPERATION MORNING STAR

Please refer to the enclosed Legislative Newsletter as well as the 2 letters which were sent to President-elect Obama from Frances Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago and President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). Be sure to pass it along to your legislative chairman.

EDUCATION AND NEWSLETTER CONTESTS

Hopefully by now you are well into judging all the entries for these Contests. Keep in mind that the winners on the Local-court level must win on the State-level before they can be sent to the appropriate NATIONAL CHAIRMAN. The specific criteria must be followed in order to avoid disqualification and disappointment. Awards will be announced at the State Regents' Conference in July.

JCDA SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2009

The Juniors will be celebrating their 83rd Anniversary this year. A JCDA Day Proclamation was sent in the December newsletter. Are you planning a celebration? Be sure to send your photos to SHARE so others can see the wonderful job the Juniors are doing in the name of CDA.

ANNUAL CDA HISTORY LECTURE – SUNDAY, March 15, 2009 2:00 PM Hannan Hall

Our annual Lecture at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. will be held on March 15, 2009. The lecturer will be Gina Marie Pitti. She is a 1994 graduate of Yale University. She is currently a visiting lecturer at Stanford University lecturing on Mexican-American Cultures. Her lecture will be “On the Border of Parish Life: Ethnic Mexicans and Church Activism, 1945-1965.”

PRIEST APPRECIATION DAY – Sunday, June 7, 2009

Sunday, June 7, 2009, will mark the annual Priest Appreciation Day, designated by our organization to honor priests who serve the organization, in addition to their many other duties, as well as any other priests whom you wish to honor. Now is the time to start preparing to show appreciation to the priests who have shared their love of God with us during the past year. Without them, many of our ceremonies and projects would never have been realized.

We would suggest that Courts use spiritual bouquet cards available from the National Office for Priest Appreciation Day. A Mass is offered at Catholic University, Washington, DC, for those enrolled. Please do not send donation until you return the Mass Enrollment Slip to the National Office. There is no charge for the card only for the postage to mail them to you. Minimum enrollment of \$1.00 per slip.

STATE REGENTS CONFERENCE

The State Regents Conference will be held at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, IL on July 9-12, 2009. The National Board will present workshops to assist the State Regents in the successful operation of the State and Local Courts. Please be sure to give the information to newly elected State Officers and State Chaplains.

NEW COURTS

It is with pride that we advise you of the institution of the following new courts. You may send messages of congratulations to the new Regents. Virginia and Pennsylvania are in the planning stages of instituting new courts. What about your state?

Court St. Scholastica #2612

St. Gregory’s University
Amy Bennett, Advisor
35904 Clearpond Rd
Shawnee, OK 74801

Court Sts. Francis and Anne #2613

Rosie Walker, Regent
14 Locker Road
Deville, LA 71328

Court Immaculate Heart of Mary #2614

Susan Werring, Regent
45652 Edge Mill Court
Great Mills, MD 20634

Court Belles of St. Mary’s #2615

St. Mary’s University
Irene Quesnot, Advisor
1 Camino Santa Maria
San Antonio, TX 78228

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS

- The family of National Regent Elect, Joanne Tomassi, on the death of her aunt, Rae Premuto. Condolences may be sent to Joanne and her mother, Rose Tomassi at their home address:
480 82nd Avenue
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706
- Immediate Past National Regent Claudia Bosch, Past National Regent Grace Rinaldi and Past National Director Lucretia Coates for a speedy return to good health. Get well wishes may be sent to:

Claudia Bosch Immediate Past National Regent 36 E 10 th St Dickinson, ND 58601	Grace Rinaldi Past National Regent 5433 W 140th Street Hawthorne, CA 90250	Lucretia Coates Past National Director 748 Shore Dr. Joppa, MD 21805
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CHANGES TO NATIONAL DIRECTORY

Please make the following changes to the National Directory:

Tom Panas, Public Relations and SHARE, new email address: tompanas@verizon.net

Laraine McGinnis, PA State Regent, remove email address: lmcginnis@gsaminc

Vicki Bentley, Nevada State Regent, new email address: grinch123@cox.net

Janet Martineau, National Director and Montana State Regent new phone: 406-798-2222

Monica Veik, Nebraska State Regent, new email address: fvtinc@q.com

UPDATED SUPPLY LIST PRICES

Financial Secretary Supplies: **#118** Receipt Book now \$2.75 each, **#162** Deletion Pad now \$14.00 each and **#163** Information Correction Pad now \$8.25 each

The National Board wishes you and your families a very Blessed Easter Season!

And Jesus said unto them, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you." Romans 1:17



National Regent

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 25	Ash Wednesday
March 2	READ ACROSS AMERICA Day (www.nea.org/readacross/copyright.html)
March 15	Annual CDA Lecture – Catholic University in Washington, DC
March 17	St. Patrick's Day
Mar./Apr./May/June	State Conventions
April 9	Holy Thursday
April 10	Good Friday
April 12	Easter Sunday
May 10	Mother's Day
May 21	Ascension Thursday
May 25	Memorial Day
June 7	Priest Appreciation Day
June 21	Father's Day
July 9 – 12	State Officers' Conference – Belleville, IL

DEADLINE REMINDERS

- 1) **National Newsletter Contest** winners must be received by National Chairman from State Chairman postmarked on or before May 1, 2009.
- 2) **National Education Contest** winners must be sent to National Chairmen from State Chairman postmarked on or before April 15, 2009.
- 3) **National Graduate Scholarship Applications** must be sent to National Chairman postmarked on or before May 1, 2009.
- 4) **National Scholarship for JCDA/Youth Applications** must be sent to National Chairman postmarked on or before May 1, 2009.
- 5) **National 8th Grader entering 9th Grade Applications** must be sent to National Chairman postmarked on or before May 1, 2009.

Enclosures

- ❖ Financial Review
- ❖ Morality in Media Donation Form
- ❖ National Projects and Charities
- ❖ Operation Morningstar Newsletter
- ❖ USCCB Cardinal George's 2 letters
- ❖ Morality in Media Newsletter

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS

FINANCIAL REVIEW

FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1, _____ – SEPTEMBER 30, _____

OR (PLEASE CHECK ONLY ONE)

FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1, _____ - MARCH 31, _____

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP ON YOUR RECORDS AS OF SEPTEMBER 30 OR MARCH 31 WAS _____

COURT NAME _____ COURT # _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

1. Total amount paid out by check for Religious, Charitable, and Educational purposes. Include amounts paid to National Office and State Court for these purposes. Do not include RKI Insurance. Total \$ _____

2. Paid to National Court:
National Dues & Assessments \$ _____
Supplies, Jewelry & Gift Items _____
Paraphernalia (Robes, Banner, Flags) _____
Other (specify) – Do not include RKI Insurance _____
Total \$ _____

3. Paid to State Court:
State Dues & Assessments \$ _____
Special State Court Projects _____
Total \$ _____

FUND BALANCES

Table with 2 columns: Account Type (CHECKING ACCOUNT, SAVINGS ACCOUNT, MASS FUND, MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS, CD'S, TREASURY ACCOUNTS, OTHER FUNDS (SPECIFY)) and Fund Balances (LAST REPORT, CURRENT REPORT) with dollar signs and lines for input.

TOTAL CURRENT FUNDS OF COURT \$ _____

We, the undersigned Audit Committee of the Court hereby certify that we have audited the Court books, examined and checked the bank accounts and that the foregoing report is a true and correct statement of the funds of this Court.

_____ Audit Committee

_____ Audit Committee

District Deputy/State Representative _____

_____ Audit Committee

Send:
WHITE sheet to National Office:
CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS
10 West 71st Street
New York, NY 10023

Send a copy to:
Your State Regent
Your State Secretary
Your District Deputy/ or State Representative
RETAIN: A copy for Court files

REPORT SHOULD BE RETURNED TO APPROPRIATE DESIGNATIONS BY NOVEMBER 1 OR MAY 1 OF THE CURRENT YEAR.

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS



**10 WEST 71ST STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10023**

Dear Officers, Members and Chaplains:

Greetings! Hopefully you are pleased with the new approach to financially support Morality in Media. The National Board continues to support the fine work of MIM and urges you to continue your support. March, having been designated as National Women's History Month, it seems appropriate for Catholic Daughters to speak out as women for decency.

It's hard to imagine anything more at odds with the mission of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas than a criminal enterprise that turns women and children into sexual commodities for profit. The global trade in hardcore pornography, especially through the Internet, is that enterprise.

This vile trade degrades women, breaks up marriages, corrupts children and contributes to sexual crimes against adults and children. It also helps fuel a global demand for "sex workers" that is being met in part by modern-day slave traders who move countless adults and children across international borders each year. All too many are brought into our own country.

Over the decades, Morality in Media has achieved many legal victories against obscenity in the marketplace and indecency in the media, and has established itself in the raucous public marketplace of ideas as a strong voice of moral sanity. As bad as things are (culturally speaking) one can only imagine how much worse they would be without the faith-filled work of Fr. Morton Hill, Morality in Media's founder, and others at MIM. Many laws now on the books at the federal, state and local levels are there (in large or small part) because of the work of MIM's legal department.

I urge you to give Morality in Media the support it has earned. It needs to continue the fight until the war against obscenity and indecency is won, not by the pornographers, but by the American people! (The membership form at the bottom is for your use in registering your Court as a new or continuing organizational member of Morality in Media).

Sincerely,

Libby Ramirez
National Regent

RETURN WITH COURT CHECK, PAYABLE TO **CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS**
10 WEST 71ST ST. NEW YORK, NY 10023
PLEASE EARMARK IN THE LOWER LEFT-HAND CORNER "MIM".

Court Regent: _____ Court No. _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

_____	<u>\$50.00</u>	Court Donation for Membership	
_____	_____	Additional Donation	
_____	=====	Total Donation	Your Check Number _____

The **FIVE (5) National Projects** to which each local court would donate **\$15.00 or more per year per project** is listed below. All checks, **payable to Catholic Daughters of the Americas** and earmarked for specific charity, may be forwarded to the National Office. See reverse side for explanation as to why these National Projects were selected.

1. Disaster Fund
2. Habitat for Humanity
3. Holy Cross Family Ministries (Father Peyton's Family Rosary)
4. Smile Train
5. SOAR! (Support Our Aging Religious)

CHARITIES ENDORSED BY NATIONAL

All checks, **payable to Catholic Daughters of the Americas** and earmarked for specific charity, may be forwarded to the National Office.

1. American College of Louvain
2. North American College
3. Morality In Media
4. Catholic Relief Services
5. Apostleship of the Sea
6. Covenant House
7. Mother Teresa
8. Tutwiler Clinic

CHARITIES ENDORSED BY NATIONAL

(All checks are to be **sent directly to the respective organization**):

Project Handclasp - Paul Brown, Director
For Monetary Donations / Correspondence only
Director Project Handclasp
c/o Commander Navy Region SW
937 North Harbor Drive - Room 104
San Diego, CA 92132-0058

For Packages only
Project Handclasp Warehouse
Bldg. 3155, Bay 17
401 West 8th Street
National City, CA 91950

1. **Disaster Relief**—Since this money is used to help dioceses where there are disasters, it can benefit any area where there are Catholic Daughters. This is a very important charitable work of the Catholic Daughters and makes us visible to our Bishops.
2. **Habitat for Humanity**—There are now many states interested in building a Habitat home in their state and the funds are not coming in to National as abundantly as they originally were, partly because states are saving to build in their own state. With this as a National Project, it will become something for which Catholic Daughters are known, and it will allow National CDA to have the funds to continue to build at least one National/State CDA house each year.
3. **Holy Cross Family Rosary**—(also known as Father Peyton's Rosary) Since the Blessed Mother is the Patroness of CDA and Catholic Daughters have a strong devotion to her, keeping the promotion of the rosary as part of our National Projects is an important Charitable Project.
4. **Smile Train**—This is a new program that was proposed last year at the National convention. It helps poor children throughout the world who would not have the opportunity to have their cleft lip/palate repaired if it were not for this program. In addition, all the money donated to this program goes toward the surgeries. This is a great way to share our charity with the poor throughout the world.
5. **SOAR**—Since all Catholic Daughters have benefited greatly from the religious members of our church, most of whom had no retirement benefits and Catholic Daughters have been such a major part of helping them through our donations, this is a project which CDA should continue.

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAS



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

OPERATION MORNING STAR

NEWSLETTER

Volume V, No. 3

March 2009

10 WEST 71ST STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10023



“OPERATION MORNINGSTAR”

First Week on the Job

January 20, 2009 was a historical day in the history of the United States of America. Our prayers go out to President Obama as he leads our country.

Enclosed with this quarterly letter is copy of a January 16, 2009 letter sent to President-Elect Obama from Cardinal Francis George, President of the USCCB, outlining programs that are in effect and which respect the dignity of life. Within three days of the inauguration, actions were taken which were in direct disregard to Cardinal George's letter.

Mexico City Policy: By Executive Order, this policy was canceled.

Signing this Executive Order is a clear signal from this new administration that, regardless of public statements, they are supporting Planned Parenthood's agenda for distributing contraceptive devices and the promotion of abortion. Further, even some liberal media question this use of taxpayer dollars to stimulate the economy.

The Mexico City Policy established a wall of separation between abortion and family planning by ensuring that U.S. international family planning funds directed to foreign non-governmental organizations (NGO's) could not be used to actively promote or perform abortion as a method of family planning. A bill (H.R. 708) was introduced into the U.S. House in late January to reinstate the Mexico City Policy. This bill will be followed and alerts may be received prior to receipt of this newsletter.

Use of Embryonic Stem Cells: Media hype make it sound as though now, for the first time,

embryonic stem cells would be used in an effort to treat patients with certain injuries and/or diseases. This type of work has been going on by private institutions for 20+ years with no success! The recent reports referred to tumors in animals – tumors have occurred in humans on whom embryonic stem cells had been tested!

Embryonic Stem Cell Research: At the time of writing this newsletter it is unknown if approving federal tax dollars for this research will come by Executive Order (canceling out President Bush's veto of previous legislation) or through legislation, possibly attached to another bill. **Why use federal dollars on researching embryonic stem cells which have not only proven unsuccessful but are immoral and unethical? Why not use federal dollars on researching adult stem cells which have proven effective?** This should be the question to our legislators.

With embryonic stem cell research will come the need for eggs. Women, including young girls, will be offered money (and could be in the thousands of dollars) to donate their eggs. There are never ending problems with embryonic stem cell research.

Cardinal Justin Rigali Homily at Vigil for Life Mass

Cardinal Rigali said we “gather to celebrate the gift of life and to dedicate ourselves anew to respect, protect, love and serve life – every human life.” He “welcome(s) a new Administration and a new Congress (who) will need our encouragement and our prayers, but **they will also need our voices, united as a**

constant reminder of the rights of the poor, the sick, the elderly, those with disabilities, the imprisoned, and yes, especially the most innocent, vulnerable and weakest among us: the child in the womb.” (Bold added)

It is the intent of the National Legislative Committee, in communion with all CDA courts and members, to “work to usher in a new culture of life.” (Quote from Cardinal Rigali’s homily.)

“FOCA or any Similar Measure”

Cardinal Rigali encouraged the FOCA postcard campaign. These postcards, sent to our U.S. Senators and U.S. House of Representatives, ask the legislator to *“Please oppose FOCA or any similar measure, and retain laws against federal funding and promotion of abortion.”* The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) might not be immediately voted on by our legislators, but “similar measures” are creeping into legislation and even into the proposed Stimulus Plan.

As constituents, we must continually contact our legislators asking them to oppose abortion rights, to oppose state and federal funding of abortion, to oppose embryonic stem cell research, to oppose federal funding for “family planning” that results in abortion.

The Prevention First Act, S.21

On the first day of the 111th Congress, The Prevention First Act, Senate bill 21, was introduced. It is a bill “to reduce unintended pregnancy, reduce abortions, and improve access to women’s health care.” Don’t be misguided – it is drastic legislation!

It would direct hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars to the abortion industry; would fund Plan B (morning after pill); subsidize birth control for college and low-income women; expand Title X (main federal family planning program that requires abortion referrals); would prohibit group health plans from excluding or restricting benefits for prescription contraceptive drugs, devices and outpatient services if the plan

provides benefits for other outpatient prescription drugs; and much more. At this

writing, the bill has 15 co-sponsors and sits in committee. More on this bill as time progresses.

Church Teaching

Going back to the October 21, 2008 statement of Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia (Chair of USCCB Pro-Life Activities), and Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Center, NY, they “urged Catholics to study the teaching of the Church, rather than rely on statements and materials from outside groups and individuals.”

In 2010 we will again be electing all members of Congress, plus those U.S. Senators whose term expires in 2010. Let’s make Catholic Daughters the best educated group of people on issues pertaining to our faith, so when election time rolls around our members are confident in their knowledge of Church teaching and how it affects their voting.

Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act

As this newsletter is being prepared, the above legislation has not been introduced for 2009. A resolution adopted at the 2008 National Convention instructed the National Legislative Committee to review this bill when introduced in the 111th Congress and, if appropriate, to issue an alert to CDA members to contact their Representatives and Senators urging support for the legislation. We will continue to monitor for this specific legislation.

Comprehensive Immigration Reform

It is expected that immigration reform will be taken up by the U.S. Senate by the end of 2009. As information is released, it will be reviewed and monitored by the National Legislative Committee.

Proposed Pro-Life State Legislation

In January, the states of Kansas, Texas and South Dakota introduced abortion regulation bills into their state legislatures. KS and TX bills require ultrasound or sonogram for abortion seekers; SD’s bill mandates that abortionists make themselves available for counseling if desired by the mother.

Approved: Libby Ramirez, National Regent

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3100 • FAX
202-541-3166

Cardinal Francis George, OMI Archbishop of Chicago

January 13, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President-elect
Presidential Transition Team
Washington, D.C. 20270

Dear Mr. President-elect,

As our nation begins a new year, a new Administration and a new Congress, I write to outline principles and priorities that guide the public policy efforts of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). As President of the Bishops' Conference, I assure you of our prayers, hopes and commitment to make this period of national change a time to advance the common good and defend the life and dignity of all, especially the vulnerable and poor. We continue to seek ways to work constructively with the new Administration and Congress and others of good will to pursue policies which respect the dignity of all human life and bring greater justice to our nation and peace to our world.

As Bishops, we approach public policy as pastors and teachers. Our moral principles have always guided our everyday experience in caring for the hungry and homeless, offering health care and housing, educating children and reaching out to those in need. We lead the largest community of faith in the United States, one that serves every part of our nation and is present in almost everyplace on earth. From our experience and our tradition, we offer a distinctive, constructive and principled contribution to the national dialogue on how to act together on issues of economic turmoil and suffering, war and violence, moral decency and human dignity.

Our nation now faces **economic challenges** with potentially tragic human consequences and serious moral dimensions. We will work with the new Administration and Congress to support strong, prudent and effective measures to address the terrible impacts and injustices of the economic crisis. In particular, we will advocate a clear priority for poor families and vulnerable workers in the development and implementation of economic recovery measures, including new investments while strengthening the national safety net. We also support greater accountability and oversight to address irresponsible abuses of the system that contributed to the financial crisis.

The Catholic Bishops of the United States have worked for decades to assure **health care** for all, insisting that access to decent health care is a basic human right and a requirement of human dignity. We urge comprehensive action to ensure truly universal health care coverage which protects all human life including pre-natal life, and provides access for all, with a special concern for the poor. Any such legislation ought to respect freedom to choose by offering a variety of options and ensuring respect for the moral and religious convictions of patients and providers. Such an approach should seek to restrain costs while sharing them equitably.

On **international affairs**, we will work with our leaders to seek a responsible transition in an Iraq free of religious persecution. We especially urge early, focused and persistent leadership to bring an end to violent conflict and a just peace in the Holy Land. We will continue to support essential U.S. investments to overcome poverty, hunger and disease through increased and reformed foreign assistance. Continued U.S. leadership in the fight against HIV-AIDS and other diseases in ways that are both effectively and morally appropriate have our enthusiastic backing. Recognizing the complexity of climate change, we wish to be a voice for the poor and vulnerable in our country and around the world who will be the most adversely affected by any dramatic threats to the environment.

We will work with the new Administration and Congress to fix a broken **immigration** system which harms both our nation and immigrants. Comprehensive reform is needed to deal with the economic and human realities of millions of immigrants in our midst. It must be based on respect for and implementation of the law. Equally it must defend the rights and dignity of all peoples, recognizing that human dignity comes from God and does not depend on where people were born or how they came to our nation. Truly comprehensive immigration reform will include a path to earned citizenship with attention to the fact that international trade and development policies influence economic opportunities in the countries from which immigrants come.

We stand firm in our support for **marriage** which is a faithful, exclusive, lifelong union of a man and a woman and must remain such in law. In a manner unlike any other relationship, marriage makes a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the common good of society, especially through the procreation and education of children. No other kinds of personal relationships can be justly made equivalent to the commitment of a man and a woman in marriage.

With regard to the education of children, we will continue to support initiatives which provide resources for all parents, especially those of modest means, to choose education which best address the needs of their children.

We welcome continuing commitments to empower **faith-based groups** as effective partners in overcoming poverty and other threats to human dignity. We will work with the Administration and Congress to strengthen these partnerships in ways that do not encourage government to abandon its responsibilities, and do not require religious groups to abandon their identity and mission.

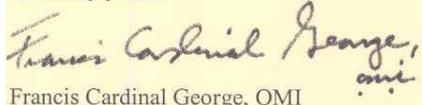
Most fundamentally, we will work to protect the **lives of the most vulnerable and voiceless members of the human family**, especially unborn children and those who are disabled or terminally ill. We will consistently defend the fundamental right to life from conception to natural death. Opposed to abortion as the direct killing of innocent human life, we will encourage one and all to seek common ground that will reduce the number of abortions in morally sound ways that affirm the dignity of pregnant women and their unborn children. We will oppose legislative and other measures to expand abortion. We will work to retain essential, widely supported policies which show respect for unborn life, protect the conscience rights of health care providers and other Americans, and prevent government funding and promotion of abortion. The Hyde amendment and other provisions which for many years have prevented federal funding of abortion have a proven record of reducing abortions. Efforts to force Americans to fund abortions with their tax dollars would pose a serious moral challenge and jeopardize the passage of essential health care reform.

This outline of USCCB policies and priorities is not complete. There are many other areas of concern and advocacy for the Church and the USCCB especially: religious freedom and other civil and human rights, news media and communications, and issues of war and peace. For a more detailed description of our concerns please see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (USCCB 2008), pages 19-30.

January 13, 2009Page Three

Nonetheless, we offer this outline as an agenda for dialogue and action. We hope to offer a constructive and principled contribution to national discussion over the values and policies that will shape our nation's future. We seek to work together with our nation's leaders to advance the common good of our society, while disagreeing respectfully and civilly where necessary for preserving that same common good.

In closing, I renew our expression of hope and our offer of cooperation as you begin this new period of service to our nation in these challenging times. We promise our prayers for you, that the days ahead will be a time of renewal and progress for our nation and that we can work together to defend human life and dignity and build a nation of greater justice and a world at peace.

Sincerely yours,

Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago
President

3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON DC 20017-1194 • 202-541-3100 • FAX
202-541-3166
Cardinal Francis George, OMI Archbishop of Chicago

January 16, 2009

Dear Mr. President-elect:

I recently wrote to assure you of the prayers of the Catholic bishops of the United States for your service to our nation, and to outline issues of special concern to us as we seek to work with your Administration and the new Congress to serve the common good.

I am writing today on a matter that could introduce significant negative and divisive factors into our national life, at a time when we need to come together to address the serious challenges facing our people. I expect that some want you to take executive action soon to reverse current policies against government-sponsored destruction of unborn human life. I urge you to consider that this could be a terrible mistake -- morally, politically, and in terms of advancing the solidarity and well-being of our nation's people.

During the campaign, you promised as President to represent all the people and respect everyone's moral and religious viewpoints. You also made several statements about abortion. On one occasion, when asked at what point a baby has human rights, you answered in effect that you do not have a definite answer. And you spoke often about a need to reduce abortions.

The Catholic Church teaches that each human being, at every moment of biological development from conception to natural death, has an inherent and fundamental right to life. We are committed not only to reducing abortion, but to making it unthinkable as an answer to unintended pregnancy. At the same time, I think your remarks provide a basis for common ground. Uncertainty as to when human rights begin provides no basis for compelling others to *violate* their conviction that these rights exist from the beginning. After all, those people may be right. And if the goal is to reduce abortions, that will not be achieved by involving the government in expanding and promoting abortions.

The **regulation to protect conscience rights in health care** issued last month by the Bush administration is the subject of false and misleading criticisms. It does not reach out to expand the rights of pro-life health professionals, but is a long-overdue measure for implementing three statutes enacted by Congress over the last 35 years. Many criticizing the new rule have done so without being aware of this legal foundation – but widespread ignorance of a longstanding federal law protecting basic civil rights is among the good reasons for more visibly implementing it. An Administration committed to faithfully implementing and enforcing the laws of the United States will want to retain this common-sense regulation, which explicitly protects the right of health professionals who favor *or* oppose abortion to serve the basic health needs of their communities. Suggestions that government involvement in health care will be aimed at denying conscience, or excluding Catholic and other health care providers from participation in serving the public good, could threaten much-needed health care reform at the outset.

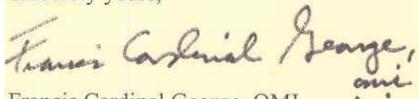
The **Mexico City Policy**, first established in 1984, has wrongly been attacked as a restriction on foreign aid for family planning. In fact, it has not reduced such aid at all, but has ensured that family planning funds are not diverted to organizations dedicated to performing and promoting abortions instead of reducing them. Once the clear line between family planning and abortion is erased, the idea of using family planning to reduce abortions becomes meaningless, and abortion tends to replace contraception as the means for reducing family size. A shift toward promoting abortion in developing nations would also increase distrust of the United States in these nations, whose values and culture often reject abortion, at a time when we need their trust and respect.

The **embryonic stem cell policy** initiated by President Bush has at times been criticized from both ends of the pro-life debate, but some criticisms are based on false premises. The policy did not ban embryonic stem cell research, or funding of such research. By restricting federally funded research to cell lines in existence at the time he issued his policy, he was trying to ensure that Americans are not forced to use their tax dollars to encourage expanded destruction of embryonic human beings for their stem cells. Such destruction is especially pointless at the present time, for several reasons. First, basic research in the capabilities of embryonic stem cells can be and is being pursued using the currently eligible cell lines as well as the hundreds of lines produced with nonfederal funds since 2001. Second, recent startling advances in reprogramming adult cells into embryonic-like stem cells – hailed by the journal *Science* as the scientific breakthrough of the year – are said by many scientists to be making embryonic stem cells irrelevant to medical progress. Third, adult and cord blood stem cells are now known to have great versatility, and are increasingly being used to reverse serious illnesses and even help rebuild damaged organs. To divert scarce funds away from these promising avenues for research and treatment toward the avenue that is most morally controversial as well as most medically speculative would be a sad victory of politics over science.

I hope you will consider these comments in the spirit in which they are intended, as an invitation to set aside political pressures and ideologies and focus on the priorities and challenges that will unite us as a nation. Again I want to express our hopes for your Administration, and our offer to cooperate in advancing the common good and protecting the poor and vulnerable in these challenging times.

As we approach the first days of your new responsibilities as President of the United States, I will offer my prayers for you and for your family. May God bless your efforts in fostering justice and peace for all, Mr. President, as you begin your term.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Francis Cardinal George, OMI". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archbishop of Chicago
President