

THE
CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

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CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE



35
years

The California Catholic Conference is the public policy office for the Cardinal Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Bishops of the Dioceses of Fresno, Monterey, Oakland, Orange, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Rosa and Stockton

January 2007

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES OF THE CALIFORNIA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

REVERENCE FOR LIFE

We hold life sacred from conception to natural death. We regret that abortion is legal and we advocate for common sense restrictions. We support non-embryonic stem cell research but oppose experiments on human embryos and cloning. We support quality end-of-life care and oppose legalizing assisted suicide. We oppose the use of capital punishment.



RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

We understand religious liberty is a fundamental principle of our society. We call for constant vigilance to protect the religious freedom of persons and institutions from unwarranted state interference. We support the religious freedom rights of the incarcerated and the institutionalized.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

We advocate for restorative justice policies within the state's criminal justice system—policies which address both the needs of those who caused the harm and those who were harmed. We promote the placement of resources into restoration, education, healing and personal accountability. We support our diocesan staff and chaplains who care for the spiritual needs of the incarcerated, their families, and the victims of crime.



HUMAN, CIVIL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

We hold that all people have the right to the necessities of life. We advocate for food and income security for our low-income neighbors, especially immigrants. We advocate for adequate health coverage for all. We oppose unjust discrimination. We call for affordable and available housing. We support the rights of workers, promote the idea of both fair wages and fair taxes, and advocate for a just and compassionate state budget.

FAMILY LIFE

We defend and support the institution of marriage between a man and a woman as the basic foundation of society. We advocate for tax, workplace, and welfare policies that enhance family unity. We acknowledge the fundamental rights of parents to direct their children's upbringing, and advocate for children's well-being.



EDUCATION

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and that access to a quality education is a justice issue. We strongly endorse equitable access to education and government programs for all qualified children, including those in Catholic school. We support needed public school reforms.

THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching embody traditional Church wisdom as well as particular teachings such as Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*.

1. LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

We believe that every human life is sacred from conception to natural death; that people are more important than things; and that the measure of every institution is whether or not it enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

2. CALL TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

The God-given institutions of marriage and family are central and serve as the foundations for social life. They must be supported and strengthened.

3. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All people have a fundamental right to life and a right to those things that allow them to live a decent life. Likewise, all people have a duty to fulfill their responsibilities to their families, to each other, and to the larger society.

4. OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

The Church calls on us to show a "preferential option" for those who are poor and vulnerable, and to work to ensure that their needs are considered in public policies and priorities.

5. DIGNITY OF WORK & THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's act of creation, a way of fulfilling our

human potential. The basic rights of workers, owners, and managers must be respected.

6. SOLIDARITY

Because of the interdependence among all the members of the human family, we have a moral responsibility to commit ourselves to the common good at all levels.

7. CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

Our stewardship of the earth is a kind of participation in God's act of creating and sustaining the world. We must be guided by our concern for the welfare of others and by a respect for the intrinsic worth and beauty of all God's creatures.



"Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics.

Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life: its origin and its goal are found in justice, which by its very nature has to do with ethics... Here politics and faith meet.

Faith by its specific nature is an encounter with the living God—an encounter opening up new horizons extending beyond the sphere of reason. But it is also a purifying force for reason itself... This is where Catholic social doctrine has its place... Its aim is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgment and attainment of what is just."

—*Deus Caritas Est*, No. 28,
Pope Benedict XVI, 2006

As Catholics
representing our Church,
we at the California Catholic Conference
seek the common good,
believing that the shaping of public policy is not
simply a task for others.

We employ the principles of *Catholic Social Teaching*
in order to do our part in strengthening
public life and building a better society.

Our Church is made up of nearly

11 million Catholics in California
representing 29 percent of the
entire population
in the state.

They belong to 1,073 parishes
located in 12 (arch) dioceses.

They are served by 3,620 priests,
24 bishops, and two Archbishops
—one of whom is a Cardinal.



The Catholic Church is the largest
private provider of healthcare, social services and
education in the state of California.

Among those providers are:

- ◆ 41 Catholic hospitals, which annually assist more than 5 million patients;
- ◆ 36 Catholic healthcare centers, which annually assist 300,000 individuals;
- ◆ 13 colleges and universities, which enroll 45,500 students;
- ◆ 115 Catholic high schools, which serve 76,680 students;
- ◆ 586 Catholic elementary schools, which serve 165,282 children; and
- ◆ 181 special centers for social service, which annually serve 4.5 million people of various ethnicity, social status and religion.

(Statistics from the Official Catholic Directory, P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 2006.)

The mission of the California
Catholic
Conference
(CCC) is to
advocate with
the legislative,
administrative
and judicial
branches of
state
government for
the Catholic
Church's public
policy agenda
and to facilitate
common
pastoral efforts
in the Catholic
community.

"Being a Catholic is not just a matter of belonging to some kind of association or congregation of people who believe in Jesus... Religious conviction of a faith is a 24 hour, seven day a week reality..."

Being a disciple of Christ is not isolated nor compartmentalized from our other vocations in life. If you are a store clerk, if you are a doctor, if you are a student, if you are a stay-at-home mom, if you are an auto mechanic, if you are an administrative assistant... You are conformed to Christ in whatever you do."

—Most Reverend
Stephen E. Blaire,
Bishop of Stockton and
CCC President,
May 7, 2006

"As Catholics, we are not free to abandon unborn children because they are seen as unwanted or inconvenient; to turn our backs on immigrants because they lack the proper documents; to create and then destroy human lives in a quest for medical advances or profit; to turn away from poor women and children because they lack economic or political power; or to ignore sick people because they have no insurance..."

—United States Bishops,
Faithful Citizenship, 2003

The CCC
also
enables
ecumenical
and
interfaith
dialogue
and
action.