

## Of Illegal Immigration and The Right To Life

- By Mar Muñoz-Visoso, USCCB

I was shocked. Finally someone said it loud and clear: **“Immigration is the greatest civil rights test of our generation...It is very close to the right to life.”** And he said it with the authority that, in the Church, comes with the teaching office. It happened at a meeting of the Missouri Catholic Conference where Archbishop José Gomez of San Antonio, Texas, delivered a speech on continuing to fight for comprehensive immigration reform as soon as the new president and congress are sworn in.

What was surprising was not so much the “civil rights test” portion of the message—around which the Justice for Immigrants campaign of the U.S. Catholic Bishops has been building awareness for a few years now—but the fact that he put this issue right up there with the right to life. And he is right, migration, whichever form it takes, is always about the right to life. Whether immigrants flee political or religious persecution, mass genocide or hunger and poverty, their human spirit of survival and the sense of responsibility to take care of your own, even if it comes at the price of never seeing them again, is all about seeking life, preserving life and improving life. It is about the right to exist and to do so in dignified human conditions.

I am not going to summarize here the archbishop’s talk. I think it should be read in its entirety (a copy can be obtained at [www.originsonline.com](http://www.originsonline.com)).

Over the years I’ve been moved when hearing the compelling reasons why most people emigrate. I was at one point an immigrant myself. It has little to do with a sense of adventure. And yes, ideally, people ought to emigrate legally. But what happens when the “come-here-legally” window is practically closed for business but a big colorful sign that reads “help wanted (lots of it!)” sits right next to it suggesting a crack in the wall? That is what has been happening for decades with our immigration laws, which have proven inadequate to our labor needs, and trade policies that liberalized the movement of merchandise across borders but not the movement of labor.

Restrictionist policies fence people in. They have led to millions of people living in the shadows of our society, and have left employers, as we say in Spanish, *entre la espada y la pared* (between the sword and the wall). While I lived in Colorado I met farmers, fast food restaurant and construction company owners who struggled after failing to interest enough nationals to work in their trade (some of them were offering more than a decent wage) and were not able to obtain enough visas for foreign workers. The current system was clearly not working for them. The dilemma was to let their crops rot, go into a mere economy of survival, close their businesses and cut off the livelihood of their families, or hire the plentiful immigrant labor at hand, even if illegally.

Clearly our immigrant program is in shambles. Responsible reform offers hope for individuals and our nation. I will feel more secure, and our nation will benefit from, knowing the actual composition of its work force and social fabric. An increase of several million taxpayers almost over night won’t be bad medicine for our ailing treasury either. Turning anonymous people into law abiding citizens could benefit the country as a whole.

We are a no-nonsense nation, but on this issue of illegal immigration I have heard enough nonsense already. Don’t expect Catholics to be silent about it anymore.

Comprehensive immigration reform now! Yes we can! Sounds familiar?

## Readings for the Week

Sunday:	1 Sm 3:3b-10, 19/1 Cor 6:13c-15a, 17-20/ Jn 1:35-42
Monday:	Heb 5:1-10/Mk 2:18-22
Tuesday:	Heb 6:10-20/Mk 2:23-28
Wednesday:	Heb 7:1-3, 15-17/Mk 3:1-6
Thursday:	Heb 7:25---8:6/Mk 3:7-12
Friday:	Heb 8:6-13/Mk 3:13-19
Saturday:	Heb 9:2-3, 11-14/Mk 3:20-21
Next Sunday:	Jon 3:1-5, 10/1 Cor 7:29-31/Mk 1:14-20

## Fresh Produce

For those in need of fresh produce – the Cornerstone Foundation, in collaboration with Foodshare, has provided space behind the Cornerstone Community Center off of Cottage Street for the Foodshare truck to come twice a month to provide you with a variety of nutritious food. Deliveries are every other Thursday from 11-11:30am. The next delivery is January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Questions? Call the Cornerstone soup kitchen at (860) 871-1823

## Attention: Sunday Faith Formation Classes & Youth Group

All Sunday Faith Formation classes and Youth Group meeting scheduled for January 18, 2009 will not meet in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend. We will meet again next Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Please Note

Rella will not be in the office on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 in order to attend a Diocesan Advisory Ministry Evaluation Committee meeting. The Faith Formation Office will open 1:30pm on this day.

## Youth Group at Cornerstone

Some members of the Youth Group will be preparing and serving lunch at Cornerstone on Saturday, January 31. We will leave the church parking lot at 9:50am.

# YOU ARE INVITED

to

## Sunday Brunch

Courtesy of your  
**Haiti Ministry**

### *Sunday, January 25*

*After the 10:45 Mass*

Please come!

## Pastoral Statement

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2009  
from the Christian Conference of Connecticut

*Mortal, take a stick and write on it, "For Judah"...then take another stick and write on it, "For Joseph"...and join them together into one stick, in order that they may become one in your hand. [Ezekiel 37:16-17]*

Christians in Korea this year have asked their brothers and sisters in every land to take from Ezekiel's vision a renewed commitment to the unity of both Church and world.\* In their part of the world, so long divided by hostility and fear and scarred by war, they pray for healing. They are not alone. Here in this nation, we too are divided—not by armed forces, but by barriers no less real: the burden of war; discrimination by race, gender, and class; human rights and religious freedom denied or delayed. The financial crisis which has befallen our world weighs most heavily on those most vulnerable. More than ever, our Lord calls us to pray and seek unity in Christ.

In the Biblical book that bears the name of the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord beckons in visions: a valley of dry bones has new life breathed into it by the spirited word of the Lord; a kingdom divided is brought together in the hand of this prophet and priest. What is thereby revealed to Ezekiel is food for thought as we gather during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. God is able, even in the face of our seeming death and brokenness, to bring forth healing and unity. We pray it may be so among us, here and now.

"Many hands make light work," many of us were taught as children. In the fields of human endeavor this is a fitting call to share burdens, cooperate in tearing down unrighteous barriers, and give generously to support the common good. These are good things for which to work and pray. But the healing unity Christ came to bring to this broken world is God's gift alone. The sinful divisions that rend the Body of Christ are of mortal origin. What God revealed to Ezekiel remains a lesson for us to take to heart. It is in the hand of Almighty God that we pray to be one.

It is our sacred calling to pause, during this 101<sup>st</sup> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and rededicate ourselves, with a deepened awareness that the unity of the Church is ordained by God for the sake of a broken world. The hope of a new creation, forgiven and reconciled in Christ, shapes the heart of our calling. And so we pray for healing.

We ask your prayers: that the beauty and bounty of creation, which is God's good gift to all mortals, may be more justly shared, protected, and passed on to generations yet to come in a manner that gives glory to its Creator; that the gaping disparity of rich and poor may be closed; that those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit may be comforted; that we who are disciples of the Prince of Peace may bear fitting witness, that peace may come to all.

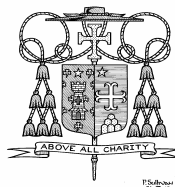
We, the Christian Conference of CT board of directors, pledge you our prayers in this calling. With humility, we ask your prayers for us who hereby recommit ourselves to work and pray together that God's will be done.

### Haiti Needs...

Our Haiti Ministry **needs these school supplies** to finish the school kits to send to Haiti in March for the next school year:

Erasers  
Pencil Sharpeners  
Gallon-sized Zip-Lock Bags

The school supplies are needed for the Faith Formation classes. **The school supplies are least expensive at the "Dollar Stores."**



Diocese of Norwich  
Office of the Bishop  
201 Broadway  
Norwich, Connecticut 06360  
(860) 887-9294

MOST REVEREND  
MICHAEL R. COTE, D.D.

January 8, 2009

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We begin the New Year with the 36th Anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision of the Supreme Court. At the same time there is a transition in our national government with a change in administrations with President-elect Obama and a new Congress. In November, the Bishops of the United States met and reaffirmed our desire to continue our work for economic justice, our efforts to reform laws around immigration, better education, and adequate health care for all; our desire to safeguard religious freedom and foster peace at home and abroad. The Church is intent on doing good and will continue to cooperate with the government and all others working toward these objectives.

The fundamental good is life itself, and a good state protects the lives of all people. The decision of the Courts in 1973 opens the door to abortion on demand which is an intrinsic evil. During the last Congress, a Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) was introduced that, if brought forward in the same form by this new Congress, would outlaw any "interference" in providing abortion at will.

The ramifications of this potential new law would deprive the people of the United States of the freedoms they now have to enact modest restraints and regulations on the abortion industry. A FOCA act would require all Americans to subsidize and promote abortion with their tax dollars. It would counteract any sincere efforts to by governments and others to reduce the number of abortions in our country.

Parental notification and informed consent precautions would be outlawed, as would laws banning partial-birth abortions and protecting infants in failed abortions. There will be a removal of freedom of conscience of doctors, nurses, health care workers and health care institutions and Catholic Charities.

As your Bishop, I am concerned that this potential law would further divide our country and we must educate our legislators and all people about the harmful effect on abortion on demand. We will be taking initiatives, along with other dioceses throughout the United States, to inform and educate to prevent any broadening of the anti-life culture.

In December, the Vatican issued an instruction on the "Dignity of a Person" which is a reaffirmation of the sacredness of human life and the integrity of marriage; it covers a positive use of adult stem cells as long as the inherent dignity of the human person is kept; it clarifies fertility treatments that "overcome or correct pathologies and help re-establish the normal function of human procreation."

We as a people of God must renew our efforts to protect the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. This includes any effort at assisted suicide, torture or any evil affecting the sacredness of human life. Please make every effort to inform yourself in these vital life issues. Join with me in praying that our government will listen to the majority of the people and turn back any effort to expand the anti-life agenda. May God bless you in this new year.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Bishop of Norwich

## The Work of the Church

<b>SATURDAY</b> 5:45pm	SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (FS) <b>Mass: <i>Agnes Pinzel</i></b> , requested by George Pinzel, - <i>and</i> - <b><i>George Pinzel</i></b> , requested by Mr & Mrs Hugh Callanan
<b>SUNDAY</b> 10:45am	SECOND SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (FS) <b>Mass: <i>Mary Moriarty</i></b> , requested by the Sacred Heart Parish Family
<b>MONDAY</b> 9:00am	<b>Liturgy of the Word with Communion</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b> 9:00am	<b>Mass: <i>Adele Sennik</i></b> , requested by Fr. Stan & the Stewart Family
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> 9:00am	<b>Mass: <i>Connie Glennon</i></b> , requested by Tom & Arlene Furey
<b>THURSDAY</b> 4:30pm 7:00pm 7:45pm	<b><i>Sacrament of Reconciliation</i></b> , Living Room <b>Mass: <i>Walter Koss</i></b> , requested by Fr. Stan & the Sacred Heart Parish Family <b>Intercessory Prayer</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b> 9:00am	<b>Mass: <i>For the People of the Parish</i></b>
<b>SATURDAY</b> 5:45pm	THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (FT) <b>Mass: <i>Stella Golnik</i></b> , requested by Paul & Carol Perodeau, - <i>and</i> - <b><i>George Pinzel</i></b> , requested by Art & Pauline Casey
<b>SUNDAY</b> 10:45am	THIRD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (FT) <b>Mass: <i>Al Bousquet</i></b> , requested by Sally Bousquet, - <i>and</i> - <b><i>Anne White Haynes</i></b> , requested by the family

## Meetings

<b>SATURDAY</b> 7:30pm	<b>Narcotics Anonymous*</b> , South Rooms
<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>Fellowship before and after Mass</b> <b>NO Faith Formation or Youth Group</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	Offices Closed
<b>WEDNESDAY</b> 4:00pm 7:00pm 8:00pm	<b>Faith Formation</b> , Gr. 1-3, 5 <b>Pastoral Council</b> , Library <b>Alcoholics Anonymous*</b> , South Community Rooms
<b>THURSDAY</b> 10:00am 8:00pm	<b>Bible Study</b> , South Community Rooms <b>Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book*</b> , South Rooms
<b>SATURDAY</b> 7:30pm	<b>Narcotics Anonymous*</b> , South Rooms
<b>SUNDAY</b> 9:15am 6:30pm 7:45pm	<b>Fellowship before and after Mass</b> <b>Faith Formation</b> , Gr. 1-5 <b>Faith Formation</b> , Gr. 6 – Conf Prep <b>Youth Group</b>