

Personhood

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whether married, single, religious or ordained clergy, as a divine call to a specific way to witness the life of Christ.

These calls, by God, to vocation, are recognized as equal in dignity, and essential to the building of a Christian community.

3. That accepting each person as the Lord's gift to community we recommend that each Christian community call forth the gifts of the individuals for the service of all and that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops reconsider policies and church structures that support persons in their shared responsibility for carrying out the mission of the church.

4. a) That the bishops, together with the clergy, religious and laity, bring women and youth to a great participation in the life and ministry of the church in order to move toward this goal, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops should initiate or open the office of preaching to women.

b) In the development of the office of preaching, consideration should be given to unordained men, married couples, laicized priests who also, by virtue of the experience of Christ in their lives, could make a valuable contribution to the community through this office.

5. That the Catholic Church in the United States of America foster diocesan, parochial, intentional and familial environments in which all persons can respond fully to the universal call to holiness.

In addition to authentic and meaningful liturgy, the means to spiritual development include personal spiritual direction, or opportunity for prayer, bible study, devotions, retreats and religious education. Providing them to all persons—diverse as we are in condition, culture, language and experience—will require the support of local bishops, the full sharing of financial and personal resources among the communities and the development of new and diverse ministries.

6. That the first Call to Action conference of the United States request of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that they exercise their option given by the Holy Father to permit reception of holy communion in the hand as a sign of adult Christian commitment and human dignity.

RESOLUTION: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The church advocates the principle of the basic goodness and inviolability of the human person made in the image and likeness of God. Although personhood is a divine gift, its development is a human, social responsibility.

A person develops through human and divine relationships. These relationships are our greatest resource, and it is to their continual, just development that human endeavor must be directed.

We, therefore, call for action that affirms personhood and insures the development of personhood its priority in the structures of human life, including action to accomplish the following:

1. That the church consider inherent to the value of the process of aging the principle of dynamic growth in every age span and give consideration to the spirituality of the aging as a resource to the church, given the contemplative aspect of the life of the aging.

That the church demonstrate concern as social advocate by providing programs for the aging which are marked by compassion and the quality of humanization, and by providing outreach as a caring community through the

medium of the parish. The church should recognize and communicate the responsibility of adult children for their aged parents.

That the church seek to promote personal dignity by advocating the rights of the aging in the areas of housing, health, employment, transportation and economics.

2. That Catholics in all sectors of the church cooperate with other groups in their communities to recognize the dignity and sacredness of each person, committing themselves to establishing a deep respect for all life.

We also recommend that Catholics endorse and work to implement the 1975 Bishop's Pastoral Plan for Pro-life Activities. This plan calls for an educational program, pastoral care, providing alternatives to abortion, and a legislative effort and public policy to insure the passage of a constitutional amendment which could affirm and protect life from conception to natural death.

3. That the Catholic Church in the United States, recognizing the teaching of Vatican II that every type of discrimination based on sex is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. (The Church in the Modern World, no. 29) work to achieve full equality under the law for men and women in the United States and full economic justice for women in all sectors of American society.

4. That social action agencies and offices give active support to efforts to achieve the legal rights and full economic justice for women in their local communities and in American society and to support efforts to inform women of their legal rights within the family, the work force, and the community in general. We endorse and support the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution.

5. This conference is about the future, and this recommendation speaks to the future, to our youth. There is a feeling of urgency, because our young are not adequately integrated into the church. There is a need for the church to reach out.

Therefore, Catholic parishes and dioceses must recognize the need for and develop ministries for those youth 13 to 18 and most urgently 18 to 35 in which they listen to young persons, as youth share their experiences of faith, community and culture, while also encouraging their involvement in all phases of the life of the church.

Youth ministers must provide and must be allowed to provide avenues and programs which foster the total person and spiritual growth of each young person and inspire young people to responsible participation in life, mission and work of the parish and college communities. We support and encourage bishops to initiate, implement and evaluate pastoral plans for and with and by youth. Special efforts must be made to include young people in the planning of liturgies, educational opportunities, and social service projects and to provide for their representation on parish and pastoral councils.

6. We affirm the unique gifts handicapped persons have to offer the church and their integration into full participation in the Christian community. Recognizing that the Catholic Church has an obligation to serve its people in promoting their spiritual, intellectual, we propose here that the church make a special effort to include, on an equal basis, handicapped persons.

We recommend that the church support the physically and mentally handicapped by providing appropriate educational and rehabilitation programs, providing and advocating necessary architectural modifications, advocating adequate governmental

funding to the handicapped person and family so that, whenever possible, the handicapped may remain in the family, advocating the rights and advocating the principle of normalization so that the handicapped can find housing, employment, social life, educational opportunities, and valuable spiritual and parish life.

We also recommend that the church promote and foster informational and educational programs to that clergy and laity may be made aware of the needs and talents of handicapped individuals.

We also recommend that the NCCB/USCC study the feasibility of establishing a National Catholic Office for Handicapped to develop at the national level the church's ministry to the handicapped.

7. That diocesan Catholic Social Service agencies offer leadership to all appropriate lay diocesan groups in planning and coordinating the various church and community social service efforts on behalf of clients. That these diocesan Catholic Social Service Agencies provide leadership in advocating on behalf of persons in need to assure that federal, state and community social service programs and monies are directed best to meet human needs. That, to assist in identifying and ministering to these human needs, Christian service groups exist in each parish.

8. That Catholic social action agencies and offices look closely at what is commonly perceived to be institutionalized racism and oppression in our society and that they closely examine the structures which racial minorities experience to be threatening.

That these agencies and offices become aware of the Hispanos, blacks, Indians, Asian-americans, and all other oppressed groups or individuals within their area, and take steps to change the conditions which dehumanize.

9. The church advocates the entitlement of prisoners to rights as human beings and full human development. Therefore, the church calls for action to insure the following:

a) The extension of civil rights to all prisoners, especially the right to coverage by federal minimum wage laws and the right to due process while incarcerated;

b) Enforcement of a moratorium on the building of new prisons and the creation and funding of community alternatives to present patterns of incarceration;

c) The cessation of capital punishment;

d) The development of parish outreach programs to inmates, ex-offenders and their families to facilitate reentry into the community;

e) Elimination of so-called status offenses for 18-year olds and younger which are discriminatory and unnecessarily introduce teenagers into the criminal justice system.

RESOLUTION: SEXUALITY

The Catholic Church affirms that sexuality is an essential element of personhood and its expression is of deep human and spiritual significance in the development of every human person. To enable the Catholic community to offer more

effective witness to society on matters concerning human sexuality we recommend:

1. That the church bishops, priest, religious, lay affirm their commitment to the validity of personal sexual fulfillment in married life while at the same time engaging in continuing dialogue with each other and with other persons who are expressing their sexuality in a variety of lifestyles on matters related to the human and spiritual significance of human sexuality.

Such dialogue should be conducted with respect for the dignity, freedom and responsibility of each person, and should incorporate reflection on human experience and gospel values, as well as the Christian tradition and church teaching. Such dialogue, coupled with serious interdisciplinary research, should provide a means of developing more adequate pastoral care and should assist all persons in the church to inform their consciences more fully on the moral dimensions of human sexuality.

2. That the church in the United States acknowledge that it is living in a state of conflict and anguish

arising from tension between the common understanding of church teaching on contraception and the current practice of many Catholics, and that this state of conflict produces intense pastoral and human problems which, in justice, the church is obliged to face.

The American bishops should use their present pastor leadership to affirm more clearly the right and responsibility of married people to form their own consciences and to discern what is morally appropriate within the context of their marriage in view of historical church

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