

U.S. bishops take Communion stand

Jerry Filteau/CNS

WASHINGTON — Politicians who act "consistently to support abortion on demand" risk "cooperating in evil and sinning against the common good," the U.S. Catholic bishops said in a statement released in Washington late June 18.

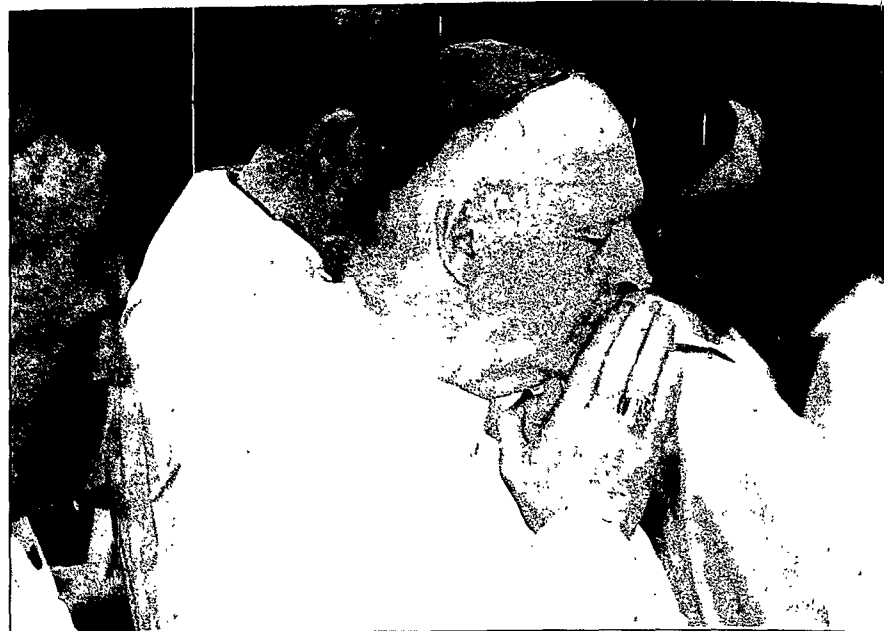
"Those who formulate the law" are obliged in conscience "to work toward correcting morally defective laws," they said in a 1,000-word statement titled "Catholics in Political Life."

"The killing of an unborn child is always intrinsically evil. ... To make such intrinsically evil actions legal

is itself wrong," they said.

Noting that "the question has been raised" whether it is necessary to deny Communion to Catholics in public life who support abortion on demand, the bishops said that "all must examine their consciences" about their worthiness to receive Communion, including with regard to "fidelity to the moral teaching of the church in personal and public life."

They added that "given the wide range of circumstances involved in arriving at a prudential judgment" in that matter, the bishops "recognize that such decisions rest with the individual bishop in accord with



James Baca/CNS

Washington Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick joins other U.S. bishops in prayer at Mass opening their special assembly in Englewood, Colo., June 14. The bishops were meeting for a five-day closed-door retreat.

Seventy-fourth Annual NOVENA TO SAINT ANNE

July 17 to 26, 2004

Theme: "Rediscovering
The Need for a Virtuous Life"

What the specific virtues might have been that Saint Anne would have taught her daughter Mary

Guest Preacher: Fr. Simeon Gallagher, OFM Cap

Saturday, July 17 to Sunday, July 25

Nine Days of Prayers at 7:30 PM

Vespers, Sermon, Novena Prayers

Saturday, July 17	Truthfulness <i>Ephesians 4: 14-15</i>
Sunday, July 18	Acceptance <i>John 4: 31-38</i>
Monday, July 19	Patience <i>Matthew 13: 24-30</i>
Tuesday, July 20	Justice <i>Matthew 5: 3-11</i>
Wednesday, July 21	Reverence <i>Matthew 18: 1-7</i>
Thursday, July 22	Loyalty <i>Genesis 1: 28-31</i>
Friday, July 23	Courage <i>John 1: 11-18</i>
Saturday, July 24	Unselfishness <i>Philippians 2: 3-11</i>
Sunday, July 25	Gratitude <i>Luke 7: 36-48</i>



Monday, July 26, 2004 at 7:30 pm • Feast of Saints Anne & Joachim
Solemn Celebration of the Eucharist

Father Simeon Gallagher is from Philadelphia, PA, and is a member of the America Province of the Capuchin Order. He was ordained in 1971 and has been a co-pastor, pastor and faculty member at Notre Dame de Sion Academy, Kansas City, MO. Father Gallagher holds advanced degrees in Religious Education, Ascetical Theology and 19th Century British Literature. He is currently Director of the Preaching Ministry Office of the Mid-America Province of the Capuchin Order. He conducts retreats, parish missions, and religious education workshops and is currently a doctoral student (D.Min in Preaching) at the Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, MO.

SAINT ANNE CHURCH

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established canonical and pastoral principles."

"Bishops can legitimately make different judgments on the most prudent course of pastoral action" in confronting individual cases, they said, but the bishops share an "unequivocal commitment to protect human life and dignity."

They urged Catholics in public life to protect the unborn and oppose legal abortion "lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil" — which in Catholic teaching is itself sinful.

They said they would counsel Catholic politicians who consistently work against restrictions on abortion that their support for abortion on demand "risks making them co-operators in evil in a public manner."

The statement was adopted by a vote of 183-6 during the special assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops held June 14-19 in Englewood, Colo., a Denver suburb.

It was issued following an extensive interim report to the bishops by their Task Force on Catholic Bishops and Catholic Politicians, formed last November and headed by Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington.

The statement said respect for the Eucharist "demands that it be received worthily and that it be seen as the source for our common mission in the world."

They cited the First Letter to the Corinthians, in which St. Paul warns that "whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and

blood of the Lord."

Noting "the polarizing tendencies of election-year politics," they warned against misusing Catholic teaching and sacramental practice "for political ends."

Reflecting on the church's role in promoting public policies that respect human life and dignity, they said there is a need "to continue to teach clearly" and bring Catholic leaders to an "unequivocal commitment" to full legal protection of human life at every stage.

They said there is a need to do more "to persuade all people that human life is precious and human dignity must be defended." They invited political leaders as well as others to take initiatives in that area.

They called on all Catholics "to act in support of these principles and policies in public life."

On release of the statement Cardinal McCarrick said, "It reflects the bishop's role as teacher, pastor and center of unity. We address the moral issues that our society faces without endorsing parties or candidates."

Cardinal McCarrick noted that last fall the bishops' Administrative Committee "outlined the principles for moral participation in political life and described the USCCB positions on numerous issues" in their quadrennial election-year statement on political responsibility. That statement, titled "Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility," and the new statement, "Catholics in Political Life," are available on the Internet at www.usccb.org.

www.catholiccourier.com