



J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE

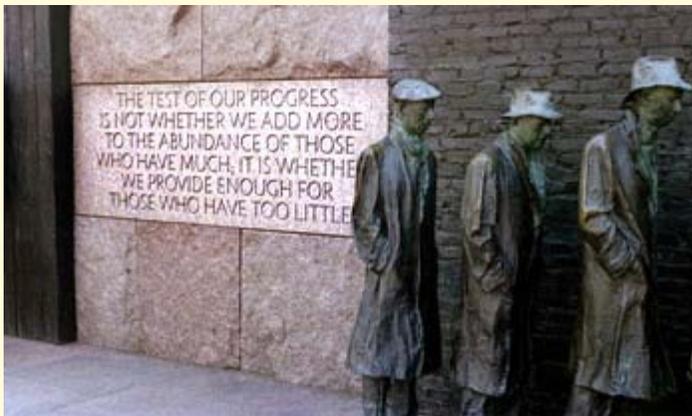


October 2011 (en Español)

- [Faith Community Targets Legislators](#)
- [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)
- [The Execution of Troy Davis](#)
- [Dolan Asks Nation's Clergy to Advocate for Poor](#)
- [Abp. Gomez Applauds New Deportation Policy](#)
- [Eucharist Without Borders: Immigration Reform Conference](#)

Faith Community to Target Congressional Leaders, Super Committee Members to Protect Funding for the Poor

WASHINGTON – The American faith community is targeting the hometowns of the "Deficit Super Committee" members to ensure the administration and Congress do not reduce the deficit by placing an undue burden on the poor while shielding the wealthiest from additional sacrifice. For the next eight weeks,



churches, synagogues, mosques and other houses of worship in the states and districts of members of the Joint Select Committee on Reduction, as well as congressional leadership, will hold prayer vigils and demonstrations to encourage "Deficit Super Committee" members to recommend a fair deficit reduction plan that exempts programs from budget cuts that assist the most at-risk families and children in the U.S. and abroad. In addition, local religious leaders will seek in-district meetings with their Congressional representation and thousands of people will participate in national call-in days being planned for October and November.

"People of faith are reminded of our calling to support 'the least of these.' We are living in a climate in which two societies are emerging -- one rich and one poor. This is happening as a result of many of our politicians being more concerned about the interest of corporations over the needs of the people," said the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, Director of Public Witness for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). "The faith witness recognizes that there are both ethical and political consequences if we who profess an intimacy with a Higher Power remain silent during this period in history while our brothers and sisters in this country and around the globe are required to endure preventable suffering and even death. I am concerned about what history will record as the spiritual consequences for a nation that proclaims love for the corporation over love for our neighbor."

This expanded faith community effort is a continuation of the Faithful Budget Campaign (domestichumanneeds.org), an 18-month public policy campaign launched earlier this summer during the height of the debt ceiling debate. Through the Faithful Budget Campaign, the faith community seeks to encourage the administration and Congress to maintain a robust commitment to domestic and international poverty programs by lifting up faithful voices on behalf of the nation's most vulnerable. In July, the campaign organized high-level meetings with policymakers, a Washington fly-in of religious leaders, daily prayer vigils near the U.S. Capitol Building and culminated with the arrest of 11 faith leaders for praying in the Capitol Rotunda just days before Congress passed the debt ceiling compromise.

"As people of faith, we will continue to lift up the voices of the most vulnerable and impoverished communities in the United States and around the world, as we monitor the proceedings of the congressional Deficit Super Committee," said Sandy Sorensen Washington Director for Justice and Witness Ministries of the United Church of Christ. "At a time when the gap between the rich and poor grows wider and wider, we believe faith and fairness call us to preserve vital lifelines for the most vulnerable and renew our shared investment in the common good."

The faith community has released a letter expressing its concern to members of the "Deficit Super Committee" and signed by more than 30 senior religious leaders from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, including 25 heads of denominations and prominent national faith-based organizations.

In the letter, the religious leaders urged policymakers to "look with fairness at potential avenues toward fiscal health, with a focus on job creation, revenue, and reducing unnecessary and duplicative military spending, and not at the expense of those who can least afford additional cuts to their life necessities."

Here is the text of the letter:

September 27, 2011

Dear Congressional Leadership, Joint Select Committee Members, Appropriators and Members of Congress:

As heads of U.S.-based religious institutions and faith-based organizations we write to urge that implementation of the debt ceiling agreement not cause further hardship to vulnerable and impoverished individuals and families. Called to love and justice, we must reaffirm as a nation hallowed bonds of mutual concern to ensure that our struggling sisters and brothers receive the assistance they desperately need to live in dignity, and in some cases simply to live.

For this reason we urge you to ensure that people who are impoverished, hungry, homeless, disabled and elderly, both in the United States and abroad, are not asked to sacrifice what little they have. We believe the programs that serve them must be exempted from budget cuts by appropriators and in the recommendations of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction.

While the debt ceiling agreement protects some poverty programs from the initial \$917 billion in cuts and future automatic cuts, vital lifelines such as the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC), Head Start, low-income housing, and other initiatives serving vulnerable families also should be protected from reductions.

Humanitarian and poverty-focused foreign assistance, totaling only 1 percent of the federal budget, also must be preserved as a way to save millions of lives, build self-reliance among the world's most vulnerable, and serve the U.S. and global interest of helping build a more stable and secure world for all people.

We believe strongly in a shared commitment to meet our nation's fiscal challenges. Religious institutions in the United States play a vital role in serving vulnerable communities at home and around the world. The rate of individual American giving to charitable causes is exemplary, reflecting the values the American people hold dear. Private institutions, however, cannot do it alone without substantial public-

sector investment. Alone, we cannot meet current needs, much less the need that would result from Congressional cuts to programs that serve people in need.

Accordingly, we urge members of Congress and the President, in the faithful exercise of their Constitutional duty to "promote the general welfare," to set aside all rancor and narrow partisanship and to strive for the highest level of cooperation, not simply the least common political denominator.

We urge policymakers to look with fairness at potential avenues toward fiscal health, with a focus on job creation, revenue, and reducing unnecessary and duplicative military spending, and not at the expense of those who can least afford additional cuts to their life necessities.

Indeed, we are concerned that sharp reductions in federal spending at this time of high unemployment and fragile recovery will put millions more people out of work, not only at federal, state and local government levels, but also in the private sector. We believe our country would be better served -- and the deficit reduced in the years ahead -- by a united national commitment to job creation now. Investment in job creation will create the conditions for a robust economy, bring renewed hope and security to millions of Americans, and result in increased revenues.

Thank you for your consideration of our appeal on behalf of our sisters and brothers struggling to overcome hardship and poverty. In the months ahead we are committed to educating our clergy and congregations about government's moral responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and act for the common good.

Please be assured that our prayers, and the prayers of people of faith across the country, will be with you and with all who undertake the important work of public service.

Bishops Reaffirm Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship as Guiding Teaching in Political Life

WASHINGTON -- In advance of the 2012 elections, the U.S. bishops reaffirmed their 2007 document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, in this coming election cycle and beyond, as the "continuing teaching of our Bishops' Conference and our guidance for Catholics in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy."

Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), joined the chairs of nine USCCB committees in offering an Introductory Note to the document. The bishops discussed this action at their June meeting and authorized it at the September meeting of the USCCB Administrative Committee. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* was approved overwhelmingly by the U.S. bishops in 2007.

"We urge our Catholic pastors and people to continue to use this important statement to help them form their consciences, to contribute to civil and respectful public dialogue, and to shape their choices in the coming election in the light of Catholic teaching," the bishops wrote. "It does not offer a voter's guide, scorecard of issues or direction on how to vote. It applies Catholic moral principles to a range of important issues and warns against misguided appeals to 'conscience' to ignore fundamental moral claims, to reduce Catholic moral concerns to one or two matters, or to justify choices simply to advance partisan, ideological or personal interests."

The Introductory Note does not modify or interpret the document itself and emphasizes the importance of religious freedom. It raises six "current and fundamental problems, some involving opposition to intrinsic evils and others raising serious moral questions." These are: abortion and threats to the lives and dignity of the vulnerable, sick or unwanted; threats to Catholic ministries, including health care, education and social services, to violate their consciences or stop serving those in need; intensifying efforts to redefine marriage;

unemployment, poverty and debt; immigration; and wars, terror and violence, particularly in the Middle East.

The USCCB is launching a new website for Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/. It will offer a wide range of web-based and written materials and tools to assist pastors, parishes, Catholic organizations and individuals. The document with the new Introductory Note will be available in print by the end of October and is already available online: www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-2011.pdf

The USCCB committee chairmen who signed the Introductory Note with Archbishop Dolan were: Bishop Stephen E. Blaire, Domestic Justice and Human Development; Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, International Justice and Peace; Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, Doctrine; Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo, Pro-Life Activities; Bishop Thomas J. Curry, Catholic Education; Bishop Gabino Zavala, Communications; Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth; Bishop Jaime Soto, Cultural Diversity in the Church; and Archbishop José H. Gomez, Migration.

The Execution of Troy Davis

By James Salt

[James Salt is a founder of [Catholics United](#), an advocacy group rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. More reflections on the execution of Troy Davis, and the death penalty, can be found on their blog, [Our Daily Thread](#).]

On September 21, after a short delay, the state of Georgia strapped Troy Davis into a gurney and then killed him. He was pronounced dead at 11:08 PM.

Whenever the government intentionally takes the life of another human being, it deeply affects me. I can't help but think of the family of the executed, the victims of the crime and the unnecessary pain and suffering that each of them must have gone through.

However, the tragedy of Troy Davis' execution is compounded by the fact that he very well may have been innocent. There was no physical evidence linking Davis to the crime and 7 of the 9 witnesses who testified against him have either changed or recanted their testimony. Many now believe that another individual is responsible for the crime for which Troy Davis was executed.

Before he was put to death, Troy stated that his hope was that his execution would lead to greater awareness about the death penalty. As I wade through the wake of last night's execution, I invite you to join me in finding ways that people of faith can be more involved in ending the use of the death penalty in America.

To help get the conversation started, I've compiled a list of a few organizations that are making a difference:

The [Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty](#) (CMN) proclaims the Church's unconditional pro-life teaching and its application to capital punishment and restorative justice. CMN works in close collaboration with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to prepare Catholics for informed involvement in campaigns to repeal state death penalty laws and expand or inaugurate restorative justice programs.

[People of Faith Against the Death Penalty](#) (PFADP) educates and mobilizes faith communities to act to abolish the death penalty in the United States. They are headquartered in North Carolina.

[National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty](#) - NCADP is the nation's oldest organization dedicated to the abolition of the death penalty. They are comprised of an extensive network representing more than 100 state and national affiliate organizations and thousands of

advocates and volunteers. Their members include families of murder victims, persons from all points on the political and religious spectrums, past and present law enforcement officials and prominent civil and racial justice organizations working to end the death penalty forever.

Archbishop Dolan Asks Nation's Clergy to Preach on Poverty, Educate and Advocate for Poor and Jobless

WASHINGTON -- Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), urged bishops and other Catholic clergy nationwide to bring the issue of poverty into their homilies. He also underscored the need for educational and advocacy efforts on behalf of the poor and jobless.

Archbishop Dolan made the appeal in a September 15 letter to the nation's bishops at the urging of the USCCB Administrative Committee. The Committee oversees USCCB work between plenary sessions and met in Washington, September 13-14.

"Widespread unemployment, underemployment and pervasive poverty are diminishing human lives, undermining human dignity, and hurting children and families," he wrote. "I hope we can use our opportunities as pastors, teachers, and leaders to focus public attention and priority on the scandal of so much poverty and so many without work in our society." The entire letter can be found on the [USCCB web site](#).

Archbishop Dolan added, "Sixteen million of our children (almost one out of four) are growing up poor."

"It is especially disheartening that African-Americans and Hispanics live with unemployment and poverty at far higher rates than others. Immigrant workers are especially vulnerable to exploitation and unfair treatment. These realities contradict our national pledge of 'liberty and justice for all,'" he said. "They also contradict the consistent teaching of our Church. Our Catholic tradition begins with respect for life and the dignity of all, requires a priority concern for poor and vulnerable people, reflects the ties and bonds of solidarity, respects the mutual relationships of subsidiarity, and promotes the dignity of work and protection for workers."

USCCB Chairman Applauds New Deportation Policy, Encourages Expedient Implementation that Focuses on Immigrant Families, Youth

WASHINGTON -- Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Committee on Migration, applauded the recent announcement by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that prosecutorial discretion would be exercised on "low-priority" deportation cases.

"We urge your expedient implementation of this proposal, as vulnerable immigrants who are 'low-priority' remain at imminent risk of deportation," Archbishop Gomez said in a September 29 letter to Secretary Janet Napolitano.

Archbishop Gomez laid out, from the perspective of the U.S. bishops, those categories of immigrants who should receive stays of deportation and qualify for work authorization, as outlined in the DHS announcement. These groups include members of families, as currently defined under federal immigration law; children and individuals who were brought to the United States at a young age and who would benefit from the DREAM Act; other vulnerable

immigrants and those who had lived in the United States for years and built equities in their communities. He also asked for protection for "clergy and religious" who serve in faith communities across the nation.

Additionally, the letter requested that the new policy apply to all enforcement branches of DHS, including Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP). It has been reported that since the announcement young persons and family members continue to be detained and placed in deportation proceedings.

"The decision embodies the kind of common-sense, compassionate immigration policies that can serve to simultaneously enforce federal immigration law while respecting the dignity and vulnerabilities of the migrants in our midst," Archbishop Gomez said. "We urge you to implement this policy expeditiously and in concert with [our] priority recommendations."

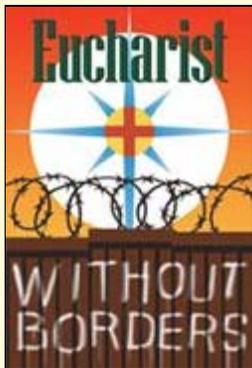
[Full text of the letter is available on the USCCB web site.]

Eucharist Without Borders: God's Welcoming Table and Comprehensive Immigration Reform

April 11-13

Esplendor Resort at Rio Rico, Arizona (south of Tucson)

Celebration's 4th Annual Conference on Effective Liturgy ([download a conference brochure](#))



Not since the struggle over civil rights in this country have our nation's faith communities been so challenged to move a major social issue beyond paralysis and fear toward a just and humane resolution. Comprehensive immigration reform is about ending a nightmare for millions of undocumented people now living in the shadows of our economy and society.

The Catholic church, because of its deep ties to immigrant peoples, is being called to join with other religious and humanitarian groups in promoting policy reform as morally right, socially urgent and economically good for all. The title of this conference highlights the truth that the Christian church cannot genuinely celebrate Eucharist

and ignore the plight of undocumented immigrants. For Catholics, wherever Mass is celebrated, there can be no strangers, no borders and no closed doors.

The conference program is directed to pastors, preachers, liturgical ministers and social activists who seek to make evident that what happens in worship is directly linked to what happens on our nation's borders, in our communities and in our own hearts. The conference will include opportunities to go to the border areas near Tucson to pray and to witness firsthand the many ministries that now serve migrants.

This conference is co-hosted by [Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church](#) in Tucson, Arizona.

Why Arizona? Despite Arizona's anti-immigration profile and a national boycott of ordinary convention business, we have decided it is important to our goal of reaching the national church to take our efforts directly to the problem. [Read more](#) about our decision to gather in Arizona.

CMSM



- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
- *provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910-4152
Tel: 301-588-4030 • Fax: 301-587-4575 • www.cmsm.org

This newsletter is sent to members and associate members of CMSM.
It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations,
and to others who have expressed an interest.
If you fall into the last category and no longer wish to receive this newsletter,
send an e-mail to postmaster@cmsm.org and you will be removed from the list.