

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

EYE ON THE CAPITOL

March 17, 2015

WCC LEGISLATIVE DAY FEATURES HUMAN RICHES OF THE CHURCH AND STATE

By John Huebscher, Executive Director

One of the strengths of the WCC's *Catholics at the Capitol* event is the menu of breakout sessions we offer on a range of public policy topics. Over the years these sessions have showcased the abundant human talent that is part of the Catholic community and more broadly the state of Wisconsin.

This is the case again in 2015. Here is a short summary of what we are offering this year.

Professor Tom Thibodeau and Associate Professor Emily Dykman of Viterbo University will offer an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching and how the Church helps us respond to policy issues. Tom will also offer a session on servant leadership.

Charles Franklin, Director of the Marquette University Law School Poll, will explain what his polling reveals about areas of agreement among Wisconsin voters and where Catholics can help our leaders find common ground on key issues.

Lawrence Berger, Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Ted Phernetton, Director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Green Bay, will share their insights on what programs effectively combat poverty and what public policies can aid the poor in meeting their daily needs.

Alice Heinzen, Director of the Family Life Office in the Diocese of La Crosse, was the only laywoman from North America to participate in last fall's Synod on the Family in Rome. Alice will reflect on her experience and discuss why being present and attentive to those we encounter is every bit as important as public policy when it comes to strengthening the modern family.

Heather Weininger, Executive Director of Wisconsin Right to Life, and Daniel Miller, Executive Director of Pro-Life Wisconsin, will come together to share their perspectives on how to advance legislation to protect unborn children and how pro-life initiatives are promoting a "culture of encounter" that provides support for women and their unborn children.

Peggy Schoenfuss, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Superior, and Sr. Zita Simon, O.P., Pastoral Associate at Good Shepherd Parish in Madison, will discuss how Catholic parishes and schools are vital sources of social capital for neighborhoods and how these resources adapt to the changing needs of their communities.

Dr. Mark Potosnak, Assistant Professor of Environmental Science and Studies at DePaul University, will discuss what the Church teaches on environmental stewardship and why this is an emerging Church issue.

Attorney Ramona Natera, Managing Attorney at the Catholic Multicultural Center in Madison, and Attorney Chuck Berendes, Assistant Executive Director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of La Crosse, will discuss immigration policy initiatives in light of Catholic teaching and what the Church can do both to protect families and ensure basic human rights.

Kelli Thompson, Wisconsin State Public Defender, and David Fields, Wisconsin Coordinator for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's National Ex-Offenders Re-Entry Project, will discuss how corrections policies affect offenders, their families, and their efforts to regain stability upon release.

Steve Walters, Senior Producer at Wisconsin Eye, will offer a Capitol insider's view of the 2015-16 session and discuss some of the toughest challenges facing the Legislature.

Jack Braun, Social Ministry Director at Holy Family Catholic Community in Fond du Lac, will share his experience in organizing a parish "Poverty Simulation" to help participants understand what families in poverty experience every month.

Daniel Weiss, Founder and President of the Brushfires Foundation, and Lorraine J. Riedl, Assistant to the Director of the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns in the Diocese of La Crosse, will examine the link between pornography and human trafficking, share ideas as to how parishes can help those struggling with addictions to pornography, and discuss how to both limit human trafficking and provide help to survivors.

Anna Haley-Lock, Associate Professor in the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Social Work, and Josie Montañez-Tyler, Associate Service Center Director for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in Madison, will discuss how to make work family friendly and how wage stagnation, unpredictable scheduling practices, and other factors are making it difficult to find quality employment.

Mr. Fields will return for a presentation with Ken Taylor, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, which will discuss Wisconsin's racial disparity in areas of economic opportunity, education, and justice, and suggest ways to help right the wrong of racial discrimination.

We in Wisconsin are truly blessed to have highly qualified people who work to make us better informed citizens who serve the common good. This quality will be on display in Madison on April 8. I encourage you to come and partake of what these people have to offer.