



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 57

March 28, 2007

My name is John Huebscher and on behalf of the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, I urge you to support Senate Bill 57.

Our Catholic advocacy is grounded in a number of bedrock principles. Two of these are the sanctity and dignity of human life, which reflect our conviction that every life is important and the principle of solidarity which reflects our conviction that life is social and that we are connected to each other.

The principle of human life and dignity calls us to assess our personal choices and policy preferences in light of their impact on all human beings. The principle of solidarity reminds us that we are one human family and therefore, as Pope John Paul II put it, "that all are truly responsible for all."

We live out the principles of human life, dignity and solidarity when we give of our resources and ourselves to people we can't see. That is why we care about unborn children and the terminally ill. That's why we ask people in rural areas to fund educational opportunities for the urban poor in Milwaukee. It is why we ask people in Milwaukee to help pay for farm to market roads in rural areas. The principles of human life and solidarity are why we ask our neighbors to care about all human life, whether in the womb, in the lab, or in the world.

And the principles of human life, dignity, and solidarity are why we all should care about what is happening in the Darfur region of Sudan. For when we stand idle or silent while the strong destroy the weak, we not only deny these bedrock principles, but we make it easier for others to do so.

On the other hand, every time we uphold human life, dignity, and solidarity, our actions not only help the afflicted, but they also inspire others to do the same. The more we affirm that certain practices won't be tolerated, the more we hasten the day when they won't happen at all.

Now it is true that the federal government is responsible for making foreign policy. Decisions about military action or economic aid to Darfur rest with Congress and the President.

It is also true that in terms of humanitarian aid, non-government organizations are already doing a great deal. Catholic Relief Services, for example, has extended its presence in the Darfur region and provides desperately needed food and other basic assistance. CRS has long managed the largest agricultural development program in Sudan.

But in Wisconsin, we too can make a difference. We can, by our state investment policy, show the world that we value human life and dignity more than fiscal benefits. We can witness our disgust at the economic forces that enable and abet the genocide taking place in that afflicted corner of our world.

We often hear that politics is the art of the possible. What this bill asks is not only possible, it is necessary for the preservation of human life, dignity, and solidarity. Thank you.