The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed “the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,” the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium* #183
The Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC) was founded in 1969 by the bishops of Wisconsin. The Conference seeks to fulfill the vision of the Second Vatican Council, which called upon the Church to be more involved in the world.

With the message of the Gospel and the social teachings of the Church as its foundation, the WCC offers a specifically Catholic contribution to state and federal public policy debates. The Conference also offers a statewide response to issues common to its five dioceses. It achieves this in several ways:

- **Serves** as an advocate on matters related to the interests and values of the Church;
- **Provides** decision makers with studied positions on social and moral issues;
- **Offers** a forum for diocesan personnel to meet, exchange information, deliberate, and recommend policies or actions; and
- **Formulates and publishes** opinions and positions on legislation and public policy.

**Structure**

The bishops of Wisconsin comprise the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference. The President of the Board is the Archbishop of Milwaukee. The Board meets three times a year to review issues and set the WCC’s legislative agenda.

**WCC Staff**

- **Kim Vercauteren**
  Executive Director
- **Barbara Sella**
  Associate Director for Respect Life and Social Concerns
- **Larry Haas**
  Associate Director for Education and Health Care
- **Cathy Coyle-Kaufmann**
  Administrative Assistant

**The Catholic Presence in Wisconsin**

The Catholic presence in Wisconsin includes:

- Over 1.2 million Catholics in five dioceses;
- 715 Catholic parishes;
- 1,844 priests and deacons;
- 1,882 religious sisters and brothers;
- Catholic churches and agencies across the state that spend tens of millions of dollars annually to provide food, clothing, shelter, day care, elder care, adoption services, and pregnancy, family and personal counseling to people of all races and religions;
- 277 Catholic elementary, middle and high schools annually enrolling approx. 53,467 students;
- Five Catholic publications with a combined regular circulation of over 90,000;
- Officiating at over 3,346 marriage ceremonies, or over 10.3% of all marriages performed in Wisconsin annually;
- Nine Catholic colleges and universities, enrolling over 26,589 students of all ages, races, and religions;
- Thirty-eight Catholic hospitals, as well as numerous clinics and long-term care facilities; and
- Over 600 Catholic cemeteries.

**Our History and Mission**

WCC policy statements and resources to guide and educate Catholics include:

- 2019 Public Policy Positions
- Statement on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Youth (2017)
- Catholic Addendum to Wisconsin Power of Attorney for Health Care (2014)
- Now and at the Hour of Our Death: A Pastoral on End of Life (rev. 2013)
- Upholding the Dignity of Human Life: A Pastoral Statement on POLST (2012)
- Traveling Together in Hope: A Pastoral Letter on Immigration (2011)
- Pastoral Guidance on Conceal and Carry Law (2011)
- Catholic Schools and Our Church: Faith Moving Forward (2011)
- Guidelines for Church Involvement in Electoral Politics (2010)
- Statement on Insurance Mandate for Contraceptive Services (2009)
- Serving All and Sacrificing None: Ethical Stem Cell Research (2008)
- A Call for Health Care Reform (2008)