

Pastor's Column

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“Weaving the Seamless Garment: Our Culture of Life Rally – Sunday, March 12, 2006”

The Church of St. Thomas More, along with St. Patrick's of Carlsbad, Mission San Luis Rey, and a number of other Christian Congregations, with the assistance of Congregations for Civic Action, are uniting to focus attention upon two initiatives—“Parental Notification before Termination of a Minor's Pregnancy” and the “Tobacco Tax Act of 2006.”

The Congregations for Civic Action (CCA) is an organizing effort that is recognized and encouraged by the Diocese of San Diego. A number of Catholic Parishes are active in the efforts of CCA to help people help themselves in improving the quality of life for themselves and others. These efforts range from local community concerns to state and national concerns as well.

Presently, this concern involves two initiatives that need signatures of registered voters in order to be placed on the ballot in November 2006.

At first glance, one may think that these two initiatives have no common link, but indeed they do, if we are attempting to “Weave the Seamless Garment” and create a Culture of Life.

The “Parental Notification before Termination of a Minor's Pregnancy Initiative” seeks to bring parents into the loop before their daughter, a minor, makes a decision for abortion. Should parents not be involved in the decisions of their minor daughter in such a weighty matter as an abortion?

The Catholic Bishops of California strongly value families and support public policy that strengthens those families and safeguards all life. In the past, they have supported the signature-gathering efforts to place a “parental notification” measure on the ballot.

“The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006” is a single statewide initiative that would raise the state's tobacco tax by \$2.60 per pack of cigarettes to help provide immediate and tangible solutions to some of California's major health challenges. The initiative is expected to raise approximately \$2.27 billion for the following:

Treatment—52.75%

- Hospital emergency care services (\$828 million)
- Nursing education (\$100 million)
- Emergency physicians (\$72 million)
- Community clinics (\$64 million)
- Prostate cancer treatment (\$19 million)
- Tobacco cessation services (\$19 million)
- Steve Thompson Physician Education Fund (\$8 million)

Prevention—42.5%

- Children's health insurance (\$405 million)
- Cancer, heart, and asthma prevention and control programs (\$292 million)
- Tobacco control, education, enforcement programs (\$194 million)

Research—5% (\$105 million)—includes tobacco-related disease and cancer research

Funding for Proposition 10 programs (\$159 million) & administrative costs (\$3 million)

“The Tobacco Tax Act of 2006” is supported by the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association, the American Heart Association, the California Hospital Association, the PICO California Project, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, the American College of Emergency Physicians, and others.

These various organizations are coming together in an historic effort to fight disease, secure quality health care for children, protect emergency room services, prevent youth from smoking, and to make other great improvements in health care service for the people of California.

Both initiatives need the support of the people and a willingness to sign petitions to ensure that they become a part of the November 2006 California ballot.

In the weeks to come you will hear more about these efforts. You are encouraged to become more familiar with these issues and to attend a special “Culture of Life Rally” here at St. Thomas More which will be held on Sunday, March 12, at 2:30pm in our Parish Center.

The Rally is meant to bring us together to reflect on a “Culture of Life” through prayer, music, and reflection. There will be speakers representing some of the sponsoring organizations. I, too, will share a personal reflection.

As Catholics, we are called to promote and live a “Culture of Life” which supports all life – from the pre-born to those caught in a cycle of poverty which deprives them of basic human needs to those who are facing end of life issues.

“Weaving the Seamless Garment” is no easy task. All of us have our “pet” issues and concerns. The challenge is to weave all these pro-life concerns into one seamless garment that reflects the message and life of Jesus.

May our efforts with these two initiatives help all of us in our Parish to become more sensitive to life and to weave together just a few more inches of the Seamless Garment of Jesus!

F. Mike