

## Pastor's Column

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### “Truly This Is a New People, and There Is Something Divine in Them”

Aristides was a second century Greek philosopher who admired the followers of Jesus and defended them in a letter addressed to Emperor Hadrian sometime around the year 120AD. Of those early believers, Aristides wrote:

*Christians love one another. They never fail to help widows; they save orphans from those who would hurt them.*

*If one of them has something, he gives freely to the one who has nothing without boasting.*

*If they see a stranger, Christians take him home and are happy as though he were a real brother.*

*They don't consider themselves brothers in the usual sense, but brothers instead through the Spirit of God.*

*And if they hear that one of them is in jail or persecuted for professing the name of their redeemer, they all give him what he needs and, if possible to redeem him, they set him free.*

*And if there is among them any poor or naked and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply the needy.*

*They live with much care, justly and soberly as the Lord their God commanded...and they do not declare in the ears of the multitude the kind deeds they do but are careful that no one should take notice of them.*

*Truly this is a new people and there is something divine in them.*

How do Christians live up to the spirit, attitude, and behavior of our early ancestors?

Can others look at us, and say, “They are a new people and there is something divine in them.”

How do we live with and treat others: our family members, our neighbors, our co-workers in our places of employment, our classmates in our schools?

Do we attempt to bring the spirit of Christianity to our political thinking or do we allow the politics of the Left and the Right to drown out the voice of this “new people?”

Do we try with the spirit of our faith to look at issues in a new way, trying to find solutions and resolutions to societal issues?

Two monumental issues facing us as a country today are the Affordable Health Care Act and Immigration.

Are we aware of the Church's position on these issues and do we bring that voice to the public square?

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) position on health care: “*In our Catholic tradition, health care is a basic human right. Access to health care should not depend on where a person works, how much a family earns, or where a person lives. Instead, every person, created in the image and likeness of God, has a right to life and to those things necessary to sustain life, including affordable, quality health care. This teaching is rooted in the biblical call to heal the sick and to serve ‘the least of these,’ our concern for human life and dignity, and the principle of the common good.*”

Although the USCCB does not support the present Affordable Health Care Law because of abortion coverage and the lack of protection of conscience rights, it does not mean that the Church is against universal health care. That is a goal that we need to continue to work towards.

Do we bring this voice to the public square?

Where does the USCCB stand on Immigration Reform? The USCCB supports comprehensive immigration reform and a pathway to earned citizenship for the over eleven million undocumented immigrants in our midst. This teaching can be found in the USCCB document, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope.”

The majority of undocumented immigrants are Christian and, most probably, Catholic. Do we see them as our brothers and sisters in Christ, as members of the Body of Christ, the majority of whom only want a better life for their children and grandchildren?

Seeing them in this light can be the beginning of a new understanding and a new voice to bring to the public square.

Let us pray and work hard to live the spirit of our ancestors in faith. Let us bring a new voice to the private and public squares of our lives.

Let us be a new people and may we recognize, and may others see the divine that is within us!

*F. Mike*