



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON · DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
Representing the Virginia Catholic Bishops in Public Policy Matters

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 7, 2011
CONTACT: DIANA SIMS SNIDER
Assistant for Communications, Outreach and Research
diana@vacatholic.org or 703.732.4172

Virginia Catholic Conference Membership Drive

More Than Doubles Network Size

Growing E-Mail Advocacy Network Campaign, Nov. 2010- Feb. 2011

The Virginia Catholic Conference more than doubled the size of its E-mail Advocacy Network during the fall membership campaign announced by the Bishops of Arlington and Richmond and conducted in parishes throughout the state. Well over half of the parishes in the two dioceses participated in the sign-up campaign, between Nov. 1, 2010 and Feb. 1, 2011.

The Conference advocates the public-policy interests of Richmond Bishop Francis DiLorenzo and Arlington Bishop Paul Loverde and their two dioceses. Most of these new members signed up on Advocacy Sunday, November 14, or on another Sunday when pastors asked parishioners to complete the enrollment postcards. Others joined the network by signing up via the Conference's website at www.vacatholic.org. New members are welcome to join at any time.

The postcard drive was the most successful membership campaign the six-year-old Conference has held and promises to be a springboard for future efforts to dramatically increase Virginia Catholics' involvement in public-policy issues involving the sanctity of life, justice, poverty, family and education.

"We're deeply grateful to the many parishes that took Advocacy Sunday to heart and encouraged their parishioners to join the E-mail Advocacy Network," said Conference Executive Director Jeff Caruso.

“We know that a large, active membership will go a long way toward ensuring our state and federal governments reflect our concerns for life, justice, the family and the common good.”

In the Diocese of Richmond, 42 parishes returned completed postcards. Another 21 parishes returned postcards in the Diocese of Arlington. Other parishes promoted the network in other ways, such as by running bulletin announcements encouraging parishioners to use the online sign-up feature on the Conference’s website.

The parishes returning the most postcards in the Diocese of Arlington were: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Fredericksburg; Holy Family, Dale City; and St. Mary of Sorrows, Fairfax. The three parishes returning the most postcards in the Diocese of Richmond were St. Timothy, Tappahannock; Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newport News; and Blessed Kateri Tekawitha, Tabb.

The Virginia Catholic Conference network is entirely e-mail based. The Conference sends e-mail alerts to its members informing them of the status of proposed legislation or government actions. Members in turn are invited to contact their legislators --- using a pre-drafted but editable Conference e-mail message --- to urge action on a particular issue. Response time is often a critical factor in these e-mail alerts.

Constituent e-mails urging a particular action make a difference in outcomes on legislation. While not all network members respond to all Conference legislative alerts, Caruso said the network has the greatest impact when as many members as possible take timely action on issues.

Join the network now at www.vacatholic.org. For further questions, e-mail office@vacatholic.org or call 804-225-8565.

###