

Catholics at the Capital: We Meddle In Politics!

“None of us can say, ‘I have nothing to do with this, they govern. . . .’ No, no, I am responsible for their governance, and I have to do the best so that they govern well, and I have to do my best by participating in politics according to my ability. Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good. I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!”- Pope Francis
(Daily Homily of September 16, 2013)

We have all heard the quote from Pope Francis, “A good Catholic meddles in politics.” During this time of political tension that can seem to be an overwhelming and daunting task, but on March 9th over 1000 Catholics from across the state came together in St. Paul and lived up to that call.

We joined together for Catholics at the Capital, an advocacy day organized by the Minnesota Catholic Conference. The day consisted of worship and inspiration, advocacy training and issue briefings, as well as meeting up with our Representatives and Senators.

For many traveling from outside of the Twin Cities, the day started very early. Despite the early wake up calls, the event was full of energy. We were broken up and seated as groups according to our legislative districts, so that we could discuss the topics together, support each other and make those connections that foster the community fellowship essential to a sustained effort.

The areas discussed in the issue briefings were:

- Stop Assisted Suicide
- Address Persistent Family Poverty
- Expand Educational Choice

The Bishops, who were all there to join us for the day, explained how each of these issues relates to Catholic Social Teaching and why it is important to our faith. Then we

watch short videos on how each issue has affected areas in other states or regions where these policies have passed or about local residents who are actively working in the fight for these issues.

Being new to “meddling” in politics and having only been to the capital once before, I was nervous about meeting with my legislators. However, after the briefings, I ended the morning feeling very informed and much more prepared than I had expected. With the unexpected bit of confidence instilled by the morning’s presentations and the support and voices of my fellow District 22 advocates, our legislative visits went extremely well. The whole day had a positive, energizing spirit and has encouraged me to reach out more to my legislators.

Pope Francis reminds us in *The Joy of the Gospel* that “Responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.” (220) This was a great step in living up to that obligation. Let’s keep it going!

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