

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 20, 2003

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Symposium Addresses Future of Catholic Education

MCC Brings Together Some 60 Diocesan Representatives to Discuss Issues

(LANSING) – In an effort to chart the future of Catholic education, the Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) today assembled diocesan representatives from across the state to discuss the past, present and future of Catholic education in Michigan and the United States.

“This symposium will greatly assist the Catholic community in constructing its framework for the future of Catholic education,” said Paul A. Long, MCC Vice-President for Public Policy. “Those who came to Lansing today helped to ensure that the quality and availability of Catholic education will be safe for many years to come.”

Some 60 representatives attended the symposium from dioceses across the state to discuss three key issues: the identity of Catholic education, the leadership that has brought us to this point, and how Catholic education can promote a dialogue with American culture and effectively engage in public forums while remaining faithful to the Gospel.

During the symposium diocesan representatives broke into three separate workgroups to discuss the above issues, then presented their discussions to the group as a whole. Among the issues identified by the diocesan representatives were:

- Ensuring social justice at all levels,
- Educating Catholics that stewardship is essential,
- Maintaining consistency with core Catholic values and beliefs, especially the sanctity of life,
- Communicating the Church’s desire to engage in dialogue with other faiths,
- Continuing to promote character development based on Catholic social teaching,
- Reminding the faithful and the community that Catholic education does not stop after high school,
- Educating students and children to recognize the counter-values of American society, and
- Becoming more involved in community organizing.

(MORE)

Following the symposium the group's findings will be forwarded to the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), who asked every diocese in the country to conduct a similar symposium in celebration of the organization's 100th Centennial Symposium in January.

The day's event also featured three guest speakers: Sister Dale McDonald, PVBM, NCEA Director of Public Policy and Educational Research – whose keynote speech “A Century of Catholic Education” gave participants an insight to the past 100 years of Catholic education.

Also speaking was Monsignor William Fitzgerald, Director of the House of Discernment for the Diocese of Kalamazoo - who spoke about Catholic education, catechetical leadership and a vision for the future of Catholic education.

In addition, Father Jeff Donner of St. Mary's University Parish in Mt. Pleasant spoke about Catholic education, faith and American culture, and effective engagement in public forums while remaining faithful to the Gospel.

The Michigan Catholic Conference is the public policy voice for the Catholic Church in this state.

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