

SYNOD TOPIC B: CATHOLIC LIFE IN SOCIETY
Christian Ethics, Charity, Hospitality, and Justice

RESOLUTION B-1: Reaffirmation of Resolutions of the First Synod Concerning Charity, Justice, and Peace

WHEREAS a number of resolutions concerning charity, justice, and peace were adopted by the First Synod of the Diocese of Juneau, which met in September 2000, and were subsequently approved by Bishop Michael Warfel; and

WHEREAS these resolutions continue to be useful and relevant to the life of the Diocese of Juneau and the implementation of the New Evangelization; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau that the following resolutions adopted by the First Synod of the Diocese and approved by Bishop Michael Warfel be reaffirmed:

1. That the Diocese of Juneau shall commit the necessary resources, and urge the other Dioceses of Alaska to commit the necessary resources, to make the Alaska Catholic Conference of Bishops an effective and respected advocate on matters related to the interests and values of the Church, and specifically to enable the Conference to offer a Catholic contribution to state and federal policy debates.
2. That the efforts of such entities as Catholic Community Service, Peace Health, and the Saint Vincent de Paul Society be coordinated more closely with other aspects of the life and ministry of parishes, missions, and the Diocese as a whole; and the Diocese of Juneau will work to inform Catholics of existing efforts in the areas of charity, justice, and peace.

RESOLUTION B-2: Outreach and Service to the Poor

WHEREAS there are many adults and children in Southeast Alaska who suffer from poverty, including hunger and homelessness; and

WHEREAS many millions of people throughout the United States and the world suffer and die each day from poverty, including hunger and homelessness; and

WHEREAS the Catholic Church at all levels is called by Christ to reach out to the poor and to serve their material and spiritual needs; and

WHEREAS this call, and the preferential option of the Catholic Church for the poor, has been reemphasized in the teaching of Pope Francis; and

WHEREAS the efforts of Catholic organizations serving the poor in Southeast Alaska, including Catholic Community Service, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and Peace Health, would be strengthened by a greater unity between their efforts and those of the Diocese of Juneau and its parishes and missions on behalf of the poor, and a greater emphasis on the Catholic Christian identity and motivation of those organizations; and

WHEREAS the efforts of ecumenical, interfaith, and secular organizations serving the poor in Southeast Alaska, including Love in the Name of Christ, the Glory Hole, and AWARE, would benefit from an increase of participation by Catholics in their efforts promoted and facilitated by the parishes and missions of the Diocese; and

WHEREAS the current facilities for emergency shelter of homeless adults and children in most communities of Southeast Alaska are woefully inadequate relative to the need, especially during the months of cold weather; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the pastoral plans for the Diocese and each of its parishes and missions provide specifically for catechesis at all ages concerning the presence and needs of the poor locally, nationally, and internationally, and the divine mandate that the Church reach out to and serve the poor on a preferential basis; and for organized assistance to the poor, including collaboration with local organizations formed for this purpose and generous contributions to national and international efforts to serve the spiritual and material needs of the poor and of victims of natural disasters; and to use the corporal and spiritual works of mercy to direct our actions.
2. That parishes and missions of the Diocese obtain the information and establish the contacts necessary to facilitate and expedite the active participation of their members in Catholic, ecumenical, interfaith, and secular organizations formed to serve the needs of the poor and imprisoned in their communities, including training and scheduling of volunteers and financial support.
3. That international, national, and local special collections to assist the poor and victims of natural disasters be promoted and taken up in the parishes and missions of the Diocese, and that organizations such as Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities USA and the Catholic Campaign for Human Development be supported in other appropriate ways.
4. That Catholic organizations serving the needs of the poor in Southeast Alaska, such as Catholic Community Service, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and Peace Health, be encouraged to renew their emphasis on their Catholic identity and the motivation of their efforts by the teachings of the Catholic Faith. Both these organizations and the parishes and missions of the Diocese should be encouraged and assisted to coordinate their efforts on behalf of the poor in witness to the Gospel.

5. That, in efforts on behalf of the poor, special attention be paid by the Diocese and its parishes and missions to the critical shortage of emergency housing for homeless persons, including many children and young people, in our communities, a situation that is especially dangerous during the months of cold weather.

6. That the Diocese of Juneau proclaim a “Year of Catholic Social Teaching,” during which the themes of Catholic Social Teaching would be highlighted in sermons, bulletin inserts, articles in the *Southeast Alaska Catholic*, and in the Bishop’s letters in local newspapers.

RESOLUTION B-3: Substance Addiction, Mental Illness, Suicidal Ideation, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress

WHEREAS homelessness, unemployment, criminal activity, domestic violence, and poor health are, to a great extent in Southeast Alaska, related closely to alcohol, drug, and other substance addictions, and to untreated mental illness, suicidal ideation, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and post-traumatic stress; and

WHEREAS the Catholic Church has traditionally assisted those who are subject to and harmed by these tragedies, either directly or through advocacy on their behalf; and

WHEREAS the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Juneau, in implementing the New Evangelization, is in a position, either on its own or through cooperation and advocacy with others, to mitigate these tragedies; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions, in their pastoral activities, will place special emphasis on reaching out to those who are subject to or harmed by substance addiction and

abuse, mental illness, suicidal ideation, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and post-traumatic stress, and cooperate actively with other entities engaged in the same efforts.

2. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions will, to the extent possible, help ensure the safety of those suffering from or harmed by substance addiction and abuse, mental illness, suicidal ideation, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and post-traumatic stress.

3. That the facilities of the Diocese and its parishes and missions will, as appropriate, be made available for the use of organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, which assist those who are subject to and harmed by substance addiction and abuse, mental illness, suicidal ideation, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and post-traumatic stress.

RESOLUTION B-4: Steadfast Opposition to and Prevention of Abortion

WHEREAS the Catholic Church has steadfastly proclaimed that unborn children are human persons, with the right to life from the moment of their conception; and

WHEREAS the political, legal, and medical systems in the United States systematically promote the killing of these children through the practice of abortion; and

WHEREAS the human cost of the exercise of the supposed “right” to abortion in the United States has been staggering, including both the millions of unborn children who have been killed and the severe physical and emotional consequences for their parents; and

WHEREAS under the natural law and divine law, as well as the United States Constitution, properly interpreted, this supposed “right” to abortion is no right at all; and

WHEREAS the Catholic Church in Southeast Alaska and its members, together with the Alaska Catholic Conference of Bishops and other persons and organizations, have in the past taken

successful public action to limit attempts to increase the scope of the supposed “right” to abortion in the State of Alaska; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions continue to affirm the Catholic Church’s proclamation and teaching that unborn children are human persons, with the right to life from the moment of conception; that under the natural and divine law, as well as the United States Constitution, properly interpreted, the supposed “right” to abortion does not exist; and that the abortion of unborn children constitutes the gravely sinful unjustified taking of a human life.
2. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions strive to provide spiritual and practical support to pregnant mothers that may be necessary to help them carry their children to term; and to women who have had an abortion and the fathers and grandparents of aborted children, welcoming them and offering them the healing pastoral care and other assistance that they might need.
3. That the Catholic Church of Southeast Alaska and its members, in cooperation with the Alaska Catholic Conference of Bishops and other organizations and persons, continue to take action in the public sphere to prevent any expansion of the supposed “right” to abortion in Alaska, and, indeed, to help bring about the minimization and ultimate legal extinction of that supposed “right.”

RESOLUTION B-5: Support for Workers and the Unemployed

WHEREAS the availability in Southeast Alaska of meaningful work that is sufficient to support a worker and that worker’s family, is frequently inconsistent and often on a seasonal basis; and

WHEREAS the physical conditions of working in Southeast Alaska are often risky and even dangerous; and

WHEREAS many seasonal workers in Southeast Alaska, including many employed on cruise ships, come from other countries and are often unable to represent their own interests effectively; and

WHEREAS many prospective workers in Southeast Alaska are unemployed or underemployed; and

WHEREAS all of these factors combine to create stress and turmoil in the lives of workers and prospective workers and their families; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the pastoral plans of the Diocese and its parishes and missions provide specifically for pastoral and practical outreach to workers and prospective workers and their families, especially those facing the challenges of unemployment or underemployment, insufficient compensation and benefits, risky or unsafe working conditions; and difficulty in representing their own interests and those of their families. Special efforts should be made to increase the effectiveness of pastoral outreach to workers on cruise ships, in cooperation with the Apostleship of the Sea.
2. That the ministers of the Diocese and its parishes and missions work to alleviate unjust or dangerous work situations in their communities, cooperating, to the extent necessary, with governmental authorities and representatives of the workers and their employers.

RESOLUTION B-6: Stewardship of Creation

WHEREAS Southeast Alaska is one of the most spectacularly beautiful regions of the world; and

WHEREAS the livelihood of many people in Southeast Alaska depends heavily on both the use and the conservation of our natural resources; and

WHEREAS it can be difficult to draw the balance between necessary development and necessary conservation of natural resources and the environment; and

WHEREAS many Catholics of Southeast Alaska have extensive experience in establishing and maintaining this balance; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Diocese of Juneau and its members, in cooperation with others, support and employ efforts to preserve the tremendous natural beauty of Southeast Alaska, the conservation of its natural resources, and the protection of its environment, while recognizing the necessity of useful development consistent with these goals.

2. That the Alaska Catholic Conference of Bishops investigate and play an active role in resolving questions involving the protection of the environment and the conservation and use of natural resources throughout Alaska.

3. That in catechesis the Diocese and its parishes and missions assist Catholics of all ages to understand the Christian obligation to provide stewardship of God's creation.

4. That the Diocese of Juneau develop a directory for environmentally sustainable practices in our parishes and missions.

RESOLUTION B-7: Hospitality and Welcome

WHEREAS the New Evangelization depends heavily upon the establishment of a welcoming and hospitable atmosphere in Catholic Churches; and

WHEREAS the frequent turnover of members in most parishes and missions of the Diocese can make it difficult to provide adequate welcome to newcomers; and

WHEREAS many members of the Church have difficulty accepting or conforming their behavior to the Church’s teaching on certain matters, but nevertheless wish to continue their spiritual journey in the Catholic Church; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the pastoral plans of the parishes and missions of the Diocese address specifically the need to provide welcome and hospitality to new members and visitors, in order to help them to participate as fully as possible in the life of the parish or mission.
2. That each parish and mission of the Diocese include in its pastoral plan comprehensive provisions to engage and minister to tourists, seasonal workers, and transient visitors.
3. That the Bishop of Juneau develop guidelines or policies on the pastoral approach that should be taken toward Catholics who have difficulty accepting or conforming their behavior to the Church’s teaching on certain matters, with the goal of presenting the Church’s teaching in a clear and firm manner, but at the same time welcoming those who in good faith strive to continue the spiritual journey of themselves and their families in the Catholic Church.
4. That the Bishop of Juneau develop policies supporting immigration reform.

RESOLUTION B-8: Catechesis and Assistance on End-of-Life Decisions

WHEREAS the fact that, through advances in medicine, many people, including Catholics, now live well past the point at which they are able to make immediate decisions concerning their health care; and

WHEREAS it is therefore prudent for each Catholic to prepare and sign advance medical directives, health care proxy documents, and general power of attorney for financial documents; and

WHEREAS information as to how to prepare these documents, and to address other end-of-life issues in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church can be hard for most in need of it to acquire; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions offer catechesis to their members on the bioethical teaching of the Church concerning end-of-life issues, and assistance to them in making their end-of-life decisions and including those decisions in the necessary legal documents.
2. That the Diocese of Juneau offer bereavement care to families, either through meetings on the parish level, or by taking advantage of modern technology for teleconferencing or web meetings.

RESOLUTION B-9: Outreach to Catholics in Need or Transition, or Experiencing

Difficulties in Travel

WHEREAS a significant number of Catholics who live or travel in Southeast Alaska find themselves each year in need of temporary food and lodging; and

WHEREAS these items are generally either very expensive or scarce in most Southeast Alaska communities; and

WHEREAS the care of those in need is an important aspect of the mission of the Catholic Church; and

WHEREAS many members of our Catholic parishes and missions in Southeast Alaska are able to provide such temporary assistance; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau that each parish and mission of the Diocese is encouraged to identify Catholic households in its community that are available to provide short term assistance to Catholics in need or transition, or those experiencing difficulties

in travel away from their homes. Such assistance might include temporary food and lodging, and help in obtaining other assistance that might be available in the community. In addition to providing for immediate human needs, the offer of such assistance would, it is hoped, increase the sense of unity among the Catholics of the Diocese, no matter where they might live.

RESOLUTION B-10: Outreach and Service to Elders

WHEREAS a significant number of active Catholics of the Diocese of Juneau are sixty or more years old, and represent a large portion of our current and past spiritual and financial support; and

WHEREAS the number of such Catholics is expected to increase dramatically over the next fifty years; and

WHEREAS many such Catholics live apart from their families or are the only active Catholics in their respective families, and assisting them in the practice of their faith would further the New Evangelization; and

WHEREAS Catholic elders remain vital members of our parish and mission communities in passing on faith and religious heritage, and seeking participation in meaningful ways even when unable to attend Mass or other parish or mission activities; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Diocesan Census specifically identify those members of the parishes and missions of the Diocese of Juneau, both active and inactive, who are sixty or more years old.
2. That the Diocese of Juneau and its parishes and missions establish through their pastoral planning activities programs of spiritual and material outreach and service to Catholic elders throughout the Diocese, and seek the resources necessary to promote the success of these programs.

3. That, through letters and other forms of personal communication, the Diocese and its parishes and missions routinely express their appreciation and support for Catholic elders and the continuing importance of their roles in the community; and inform them of the services available to help meet their special needs, such as Anointing of the Sick, Reconciliation, and Holy Communion at their homes, spiritual counseling, transportation to Mass, end-of-life planning assistance, and referral to local senior services.
4. That, in the implementation of the New Evangelization, service and outreach to Catholic elders be appreciated, not only as of benefit to the elders themselves, but also to their family members who might be invited to adhere or return to the faith of their elderly relative.
5. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions establish special events and celebrations designed to thank Catholic elders for their years of support and service and offering them an opportunity to share their faith in meaningful ways.
6. That the Diocese and its parishes and missions provide opportunities for bringing children and young people, on the one hand, and elders, on the other, together for mutual sharing and assistance, recognizing the statement of Pope Francis that “Young Catholics have the strength to move the Church forward, while older Catholics have the ‘wisdom of life’ to share what shouldn’t be discarded.”

RESOLUTION B-11: Indigenous Peoples of Southeast Alaska

WHEREAS in April of 2002 Alaska’s Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter in response to issues concerning the way of life of Alaska’s Natives, including subsistence, addressing this political debate through the Catholic principles of solidarity, stewardship, dignity of work, subsidiarity, and helping those in need when considering subsistence; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Second Synod of the Diocese of Juneau:

1. That the Catholic Church of Southeast Alaska acknowledge the sovereignty of Alaska's indigenous peoples to live and thrive on the resources that have sustained them in body, mind, and spirit since time immemorial, and that the Church assert its judgment based on the truth as presented through Catholic Social Teaching and through a reclamation of the indigenous peoples' history and relationship to the land and sea.
2. That a Southeast Alaska Catholic Native Advisory Commission be established to ensure that the needs and interests of the indigenous peoples of Southeast Alaska be recognized in the policies, practices, and pastoral planning of the Diocese and its parishes and missions; and that a workshop or conference be scheduled by the Diocese to invite an indigenous expert representative for awareness.