



The
CATHOLIC CASE FOR
OBAMA

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Founder of Catholic Democrats



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ISBN 9780615231945

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In a time of division in our country and our church, this book is dedicated to all those Catholics who are earnestly seeking to bring their faith into the world in a way that makes America a better place for all.



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PREFACE

Before he was a devoted husband and father, or a U.S. Senator, or a presidential candidate of historic accomplishments, Barack Obama took a job working as a community organizer for a group of 8 Catholic parishes in one of the nation's largest cities. With funding from the U.S. Bishops and working for three years out of an office in a Catholic church rectory, he embarked on a campaign to empower the lives of thousands of people who were suffering through economic circumstances not unlike what has befallen our country today. This booklet tells the story of his early exposure to Catholicism, compares the contours of his public life with the Catholic Social Tradition, and explores the reasons why many Catholics will be enthusiastically voting in 2008 to elect Barack Obama as the next president.

*— Victoria Reggie Kennedy
Hyannis Port, Massachusetts*

INTRODUCTION

The president of the United States holds many jobs: chief executive officer of a trillion dollar organization, commander of the military, and leader of a political party. But perhaps most of all, he or she is a heroic figure and moral example for our children and for the life of the country.

This book is about one candidate for President, Senator Barack Obama, and his relationship with American Roman Catholics. Senator Obama has drawn the support of millions of Catholics across the United States. We explore here the reasons why so many Catholics have chosen to support him, an act rooted for many in what it means to be an American Catholic today. In doing so, perhaps we will shed some light on how American Catholics connect their faith and politics. Reading this may persuade some people to vote for Senator Obama. We hope you are one of them. At the very least, we think that it will give you a more accurate picture of him and his relationship to Catholicism.

This discussion is about issues, like peace and war, the environment and life itself. It is also about recreating a sense of community in a time of division. Eight years of war, and news stories about torture and soaring national debt, have served to put every American who travels abroad in the position of having to explain the unpopular actions of our government. The sense of international community created by the collapse of communism in 1989 was virtually lost in eight-years of failure to collaborate or listen to our allies around the world.

Americans seem tired of being pitted against one another over issues of race, disparity of wealth, and religion. Senator Obama has made bringing Americans together to solve common problems the central theme of his campaign, which focuses on restoring the pride Americans once felt about our country being a moral leader among all nations. The cornerstones of Catholic Social Teaching are justice and reconciliation. The Catholic path takes us away from the divisions and hatreds of the present, and toward a more peaceful future.

THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Catholics may not talk much about politics in the years between presidential elections. But every four years, many of us immerse ourselves in politics as one means of affirming who we are as Catholics, and what we believe in. We are the quintessential swing voters, concentrated in the 'swing states' and often committed more to finding the best candidate than to swearing allegiance to either party. The party of President Bush understood this in a way that had not been appreciated before 2000, and his campaign invested millions of dollars in portraying his opponents as lacking in virtue from a Catholic point of view. This book is largely about deconstructing these myths that were planted in the public imagination, and particularly in the minds of conservatives.

In the wake of so many years of seemingly endless war, slowing progress against abortion, increased indebtedness imposed on the next generation, and a general consensus that the country is headed in the wrong direction, Catholic attitudes appear to be changing. Many Catholics have begun to recognize how our religious language and symbols have been appropriated to win elections for people with a world view that significantly diverges from Catholic teaching and sensibilities.

The Catholic perspective on American political life is very much shaped by Catholic Social Teaching, a view of the world developed over the past 120 years through a series of church encyclicals, synods and pastoral letters addressing the dignity of the individual and in particular the plight of the world's poor. Although Senator Obama is a member of the United Church of Christ, he has a world view that has been very much shaped by his exposure to Catholic thought. He attended Catholic elementary school in his earliest formative years, and received support in his community organizing work in Chicago from the Archdiocese of Chicago and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops through the Campaign for Human Development.

What does it mean to be an American Catholic in 2008? For many people the first things that come to mind are our beautiful churches, our dedicated nuns and priests, and the image of people marking themselves with the 'sign of the cross.' The sign of the cross is an ancient symbol, and as Catholics we live at the center of that cross of Christ.

The sign of the cross connects the vertical to the horizontal. We have a vertical connection across time to earlier generations of Christians. The horizontal connects us beyond our own horizons with today's Catholics around the world. Tradition and sacrament—joining together with our worldwide community of believers and a sense of responsibility for one another. It is through this lens, at the crossroads between the ancient and the modern, that we view the question of how a Catholic thinks about a presidential election. For reasons explored here, the election of 2008 is among the most critical of any in our lifetime.

This book explores the life and work of Barack Obama and his running mate, Senator Joseph Biden. It explains how their political adversaries are seeking to misrepresent their views in this election, especially with regard to those issues that matter uniquely to people of faith. Because Senator Biden is a devoted Catholic, we explore his faith biography and the way that some conservatives are seeking to use his Catholicism against him in the election. Finally, the book presents, from a Catholic point of view, how the two senators and their administration plan to tackle the most serious issues facing our country.

BARACK'S CATHOLIC BIOGRAPHY

Barack Obama's remarkable story has been much-chronicled through the course of his presidential campaign. He was born in Hawaii where his mother was an 18-yr-old college student and his father a newly-arrived graduate student. In the Catholic Church, Barack's birthdate of August 4 is the feast day of St John Vianney, a spectacular preacher with an international reputation that drew crowds of up to 20,000 pilgrims each year to hear him speak.[1]

Barack's father had come from Africa, and his name—which means “blessed”—was derived from the language of the Luo tribe. And despite his parents separating when he was two years old, he is said to have had a very happy early childhood in Honolulu in the care of his mother and her parents. His mother remarried when Barack was 4-years-old, and the family moved abroad, to Jakarta Indonesia, when he was six. His first school was a neighborhood Catholic academy, the St. Francis Assisi Foundation School. He began first grade there a few months after

Martin Luther King Jr and Bobby Kennedy were killed on the other side of the world, in 1968.

Barack's Catholic elementary school had only opened the previous year, and welcomed children of any religion. His first-grade teacher, Israella Dharmawan (now age 64), said that like all the other students, "Obama had to pray before and after each class, and cross himself in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." [2] In his book *Dreams from my Father*, Barack describes his experience in somewhat mischievous terms. "In Catholic school, when it came time to pray, I would pretend to close my eyes, then peek around the room." [3]

His family subsequently moved to a middle class neighborhood, some distance from the St Francis School, and he was enrolled in a selective public school in central Jakarta that was part of the legacy of Dutch colonial rule.

In his memoir, Barack describes memories of finding himself in the company of a very different set of classmates compared to most of his contemporaries in American Catholic schools. "The children of farmers, servants, and low-level bureaucrats had become my best friends, and together we ran the streets morning and night, hustling odd jobs, catching crickets, battling swift kites with razor-sharp lines—the loser watched his kite soar off with the wind, and knew that somewhere other children had formed a long wobbly train, their heads toward the sky, waiting for their prize to land." [3]

He describes seeing beggars every day, "in tattered clothing matted with dirt, some without arms, others without feet, victims of scurvy or polio or leprosy walking on their hands or rolling down the crowded sidewalks in jerry-built carts, their legs twisted behind them like contortionists'." (ibid p 38). He also became aware at a very young age of the extremes of suffering in the world. Indonesia had undergone a military coup the year before the family's arrival there, and hundreds of thousands of people had been killed. "The world was violent, I was learning, unpredictable and often cruel."

After attending high school in his native Hawaii and starting college in Los Angeles, he transferred to Columbia University in New York City. He received his degree in political science. During a time of escalating nuclear tensions with the

Soviet Union, Barack wrote his senior thesis on Soviet nuclear disarmament.

He found his way back into the Catholic world very much by chance. Barack says in his first book that he attempted to find work just out of college as a community organizer, motivated by an early allegiance to the idea of 'change.' He wrote (ibid p. 133),

I didn't know anyone making a living that way. When classmates in college asked me just what it was that a community organizer did, I couldn't answer them directly. Instead, I'd pronounce on the need for change. Change in the White House, where Reagan and his minions were carrying on their dirty deeds. Change in the Congress, compliant and corrupt. Change in the mood of the country, manic and self-absorbed. Change won't come from the top, I would say. Change will come from a mobilized grass roots... In the month leading up to graduation, I wrote to every civil rights organization I could think of, to any black elected official in the country with a progressive agenda, to neighborhood councils and tenant rights groups. When no one wrote back, I wasn't discouraged. I decided to find more conventional work for a year, to pay off my student loans and maybe even save a little bit. I would need the money later, I told myself. Organizers didn't make any money; their poverty was proof of their integrity.

He worked briefly for an international consulting firm, and then for the New York Public Interest Group as an advocate for college students.[4] But in his memoir, Barack spends 150 pages talking about his experience working on the South Side of Chicago as a community organizer, primarily within eight Catholic parishes that had witnessed stark economic misfortune during the 1970s and 80s. He was recruited by a character named Marty Kaufman, Barack's pseudonym for Gerald Kellman, a recent Catholic convert who had made a career as an organizer in Chicago. Mr. Kellman advertised widely in search of someone who could reach out to black church leaders and their congregants.

Jerry Kellman's own story is a fascinating one, beyond the central role he plays as a mentor in Barack's book.[5] While still in high school, he became active in the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. He continued this work in college, and then trained as a community organizer in Chicago.[6] During the 1970s, he collaborated with a number of Jesuit scholastics from Chicago who had taken time off from their training to become community organizers in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago.[7]

At that time, the bi-state Calumet Region was going through a massive economic shock that resulted from the closings of steel mills, in an area that was home to the biggest steel production capacity in the world. But these companies had been devastated by foreign competition from countries that had nationalized their steel industries, and by the fact that technology was changing. The major companies, like US Steel, had invested relatively little in retooling, and began diversifying their ownership portfolios.

Steel production was the anchor of the economy, but a chain reaction occurred with these plant closings that led to auto assembly plants closing, then public and private investment pulling out, then retail stores began to close. Mr. Kellman began talking to Catholic pastors, whose parishioners included a fairly large African-American population that was Roman Catholic. Initially he had trouble getting these pastors interested in collective action, until he met Fr. Leo Mahon. Like many other priests of his era, and with the encouragement of Chicago Cardinal Albert Meyer, Fr. Mahon had responded to the call of Pope John XXIII to minister to the needs of Latin

America's poor in the early 1960s. As recounted in a new book entitled *Fire Under My Feet: A Memoir of God's Power in Panama*, Fr. Mahon built a mission called St. Miguelito outside Panama City, Panama. For 12 years he labored on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people, embarking on pioneering work in building Christianity and democracy, and establishing access to clean water and other basic human needs.

Mr. Kellman joined with Fr. Mahon to recruit twenty suburban Catholic parishes to participate in a new effort at community organizing. In 1982, newly consecrated Archbishop Joseph Bernardin was in his first year, and Mr. Kellman recounted that the Cardinal "told any pastor that wouldn't join this organization to go to confession. And so we had a very good response in the parishes." The consortium of parishes paid about \$5000 apiece to hire some community organizers, including Mr. Kellman, to work in an area that was home to a mix of blacks, whites and Latinos.[8]

Fr. Mahon and other missionaries sought to bring to bear their experience in Panama on the similar struggles of people in Chicago.[9] This focus on "listening" to the needs of people, rather than trying to organize around some particular issue in pursuit of grant funding, became a model for what Jerry Kellman was trying to do. He decided to move from the suburban parishes into the inner city, and to develop a separate board of directors to meet the poverty criteria for grant funding by the Catholic Bishops' Campaign for Human Development. So he and two friends created the *Developing Communities Project* (DCP), which was the organization that hired young Barack. Fr. Mahon, who had trained a whole generation of Chicago priests in the mission in Panama, told me that Mr. Kellman returned from New York very impressed with his new recruit. "Jerry told me then 'Watch this guy. He's going to be somebody great some day!'"

Mr. Kellman knew a young priest named Fr. Bill Stenzel, the pastor at Holy Rosary parish in the Roseland section on the south side of Chicago, and negotiated an arrangement for Barack's office space in the rectory there to suit the new DCP enterprise. The Roseland neighborhood, where Holy Rosary is located, has a quiet dignity that derives from its pivotal place in the history of the labor movement—the place where President Grover Cleveland sent troops in 1894 to suppress the famous Pullman Strike.[10]

Reminiscing about his time working in this neighborhood, Barack said in an October 2008 interview with Catholic Digest, “I got my start as a community organizer working with mostly Catholic parishes on the South Side of Chicago that were struggling because the steel plants had closed. The Campaign for Human Development helped fund the project, and so very early on, my career was intertwined with the belief in social justice that is so strong in the Church.”



*Shrine of Our Lady,
Holy Rosary Church,
Chicago*



*Holy Rosary Church, site of Barack Obama's
office from 1985-1988 while he headed the
DCP community organizing effort on Chicago's
South Side.*

When he arrived in Chicago, he found himself in the most modest possible circumstances in his new job. He set up shop in a windowless two-room office in the rectory at Holy Rosary on South Martin Luther King Drive. Of the six Holy Rosary parishes in Chicago, this one had been known as “Holy Rosary Irish” because of the traditionally heavy Irish immigrant presence there over its history. But when Barack arrived, most of the Irish Catholics had fled the economic misfortune that had befallen this area.

The pastor of Holy Rosary, Fr. Stenzel, was a man with a booming voice who had a degree in business and economics from the Illinois Institute of Technology. Fr. Stenzel entered the priesthood as a second career, and Holy Rosary was his first opportunity to serve as a pastor. At the time he was overseeing a melding of two elementary schools, as the number of Catholics in the Roseland neighborhood dropped precipitously. When Barack arrived at the church, about 200 mostly non-Catholic

students were enrolled there in the new St. Mark the Evangelist School. The School Sisters of Notre Dame had left by then, replaced by lay teachers dedicated to teaching in the inner city.

Barack did not teach at the school, but he had an opportunity to get acquainted with many of the parents. One priest, who helped run another large Catholic school nearby, told me, “Senator Obama certainly had a respect for the Catholic school system, particularly when it was the only alternative for education of the poor. He recognized that Catholic schools became a vehicle by which children could be prepared to compete in life.” As a candidate for the US Senate in 2004, Barack’s campaign filmed one of its television commercials in a Catholic school, championing the education that the children were receiving there.

Barack’s office in 1985 was on the first floor of the rectory, previously a living quarters for one of the priests and subsequently for a housekeeper. But hard times had led to her departure, and the office’s only window had been bricked over to put in a heating unit. There were no signs on the door indicating the names or mission of Barack, Mr. Kellman, or the couple of other organizers who worked there with them. The office was equipped with old furniture, and new Apple computers. Adjoining Barack’s office was a conference room, where meetings took place because the office itself was too small and uninviting for visitors. Also nearby was the “mixed marriage parlor,” where weddings between Catholics and non-Catholics were held, since at that time inter-religious marriages were not allowed in the church itself.

Fr. Stenzel was impressed with the young man who took up shop there, commenting, “Barack was doing what he was doing, and he wasn’t creating a resume. He had an unusual self-confidence and a kindness about him. When he first arrived, he asked me if it would be OK to come to Mass on Sunday.” The two subsequently became friends and Barack attended Mass at Holy Rosary many times that first year.[11]

Years later, once Barack became an Illinois state legislator, he became friendly with Cardinal Bernardin, who himself attained a towering status in American Catholicism as the author of the Bishops’ Peace Pastoral, as president of the US Bishops’ Conference, as creator of the “Common Ground Project,” and as a champion of the

notion of “the consistent ethic of life.” In an October 2008 interview, Barack said, “I’ve tried to apply the precepts of compassion and care for the vulnerable that are so central to Catholic teachings to my work, [such as in] making health care a right for all Americans — I was the sponsor in the state legislature for the Bernardin Amendment, named after Cardinal Bernardin, a wonderful figure in Chicago I had the opportunity to work with who said that health care should be a right.”

Raised with no specific religious training himself, Barack found himself surrounded in 1984 by religion. One priest he met that first year described it this way: “Barack may not have identified himself as religious, but the religious and Christian principles he held told me that obviously he must have read [the scriptures] and studied them somewhere, because he knew it and spoke knowledgably about it.” Mr. Kellman also spoke to the subject of Barack’s religious formation, the role that Catholicism played in it, and the indignities he suffered as a result of his labors on behalf of the Catholic parishes:

The first year, all his work was in the Catholic Church. All his committees were Catholic...His work with the Catholic churches was his first introduction as an adult to Christianity. He was shaped by his interactions at that point with Catholic priests and lay people. The second year he expanded his outreach to other Christian churches. Perhaps not surprisingly, he was attacked because he worked for the Church. A lot of people wanted to discredit him. It’s almost funny now, but they would say, “He’s just a tool of the Catholics.” People who were politically connected would criticize him in that way. His education as a community organizer was shaped by the Catholic Church. Each

meeting began and ended with prayer. He'd go to Mass to try and understand what was happening with pastors and lay people.

Despite the economic descent of the city, there remained a religious fervor in Chicago that derived in part from the city being home to twelve schools of theology. Barack obtained a small apartment in Hyde Park, near the University of Chicago and the Catholic Theological Union.[12] Barack began his new career by going around to meet the pastors in this cluster of eight Catholic parishes. One of those priests described it this way in an interview:

We were constantly getting calls from community organizers who wanted to meet, and then I get a call from yet another young guy who asked to set up a meeting. You set up a meeting with this young community organizer, and I'm asking myself, you know, "how can I get out of this? How quick could I make it out of this meeting?" But what I thought was going to be a half hour meeting went to an hour-and-a-half or more. I was so impressed with his passion for people, and wanting to do something about it. But most impressive was his belief that the church had to be the vessel to bring people together to fight on behalf of people — that we all had to be a part of this response to the needs of people. He recognized that the churches were where people had put their trust, and people had put their faith, and that we had to be the response team for it.

What struck me about him was, yes, his intelligence, but also his grounded ability to relate to where people were at and to feel it. He wasn't emotionally removed from it. He was very much in touch with it. That was very impressive to me. His real conviction. I remember telling him, this is what we believe here, teach here, what we're about here. "Good luck" bringing these churches into this kind of commitment to change.

Barack's first job was to build a body of leaders who would be willing to work with each other, and to generate some hope the problems around them could be solved. Rampant drugs and crime had left people in Roseland with little hope that anything could be done. So Barack had to get them to be hopeful again, and to regain their trust. He had to convince them to get involved. The chief thing he did in the beginning was to learn to do one-on-one interviews with the lay leaders of the parishes. In those interviews he would listen for narratives and get the story of people's lives. He was good at that, because he liked stories.

He would conduct 12 interviews a day, going from one to another. He'd go back to his apartment in Hyde Park, and write a report as a basis for discussion. When he talked to people, he was not only interested in their stories, but had a knack for developing a trusting relationship with them and gaining a point of invitation into the story. For instance if there was a parent who was worried about their kids getting interested in gangs and drugs, they might be willing to get involved with other parents who shared that concern. According to Mr. Kellman, Barack would say, "You feel so strongly about this from your own life, don't you want to do something about this?" So he spent his first few months identifying neighborhood leaders, gathering people at street corner meetings during the summer, and talking about the neighborhoods. Their tasks ranged from simple things like trying to get potholes fixed, to getting abandoned buildings torn down.

Mr. Kellman recounts how these were people who had no public skills. An organizers' job is to get people to participate in democracy. So he had to train them to ask simple questions like what legislation would apply in this situation? Who stands to win or lose? How does the budget get decided on? How do you meet with a public official? How do you talk to a reporter? All the while, he was never in the forefront, always in the background. Said Mr. Kellman, "Now [in 2008] all these kids who are ambitious want to become organizers—it's pretty funny, quite an irony!"



Jerry Kellman, Catholic organizer who recruited Barack Obama to relocate from New York to the South Side of Chicago.

Mr. Kellman left the organizing project a year after hiring Barack, leaving him in charge to build the organization and expand its funding.[13]

After Barack rose to become executive director of the DCP, the thrust of the work for DCP moved from listening to making neighborhood life better for all the residents. Marriages in the Roseland area had been sundered by economic circumstances. Drugs were common but jobs were scarce, and no one felt particularly safe on their own streets. Particular efforts included opening a job intake center, forming neighborhood groups that organized clean-ups and pressed the Park District into improving city parks, and organizing crime watch programs. The DCP also worked to have cancer-causing asbestos removed from public housing. Barack was particularly enthusiastic about addressing issues involving youth, especially the establishment of after school programs and job retraining at six junior colleges in Chicago. Barack also contributed to leadership skills training on behalf of the Chicago Archdiocesan Office of Black Catholics.

Barack's work got its start with funding from the Catholic Campaign for

Human Development.[14] In 1986, during Barack's time at Holy Rosary, the Bishops issued Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy, which said, "Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community." Building community was at the heart of Barack's work for those three years. One priest described his commitment this way: "I know he respected immensely the Catholic religion and its presence in not just the Civil Rights movement but the fights for workers rights — particularly nuns and priests and how engaged they were."

But Barack's history as a community organizer did not sit well with his Republican opponents in the fall of 2008. Vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin's acceptance speech September 3 mocked Barack, saying, "I guess a small-town mayor is sort of like a community organizer, except that you have actual responsibilities." Her speech followed that of the Catholic former mayor of New York, Rudy Giuliani, who also belittled the role that community organizers play in politics. What followed was an outpouring of press condemnation for their sarcasm, acknowledging that community organizing is at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching to end poverty and promote social justice. Joe Klein, political correspondent for TIME Magazine, wrote:

They were making fun of a young man's decision "to serve a cause greater than himself," in the words of John McCain. They were, therefore, mocking one of their candidate's favorite messages. Obama served the poor for three years, then went to law school. To describe this service — the first thing he did out of college, the sort of service every college-educated American should perform, in some form or other — as anything other than noble is cheap and tawdry and cynical in the extreme.{15}

Sadly, Holy Rosary Church was closed by the Archdiocese of Chicago in the spring of 2008, and Barack's old office was put up for sale in the summer just prior to the presidential election. The closing of inner city churches, both Catholic and Protestant, comes at a time when conservatives want those churches to provide the social safety net rather than empowering local governments to help people in need. Barack held a press conference in July 2008 to announce his intent to expand funding for Faith-Based Funding of such projects, but emphasized that private philanthropy cannot be a substitute for job training and other educational responsibilities that rightfully belong to our government. As an accomplished former community organizer, he knew what he was talking about.

A REMARKABLE CAMPAIGN, AND A CATHOLIC VICE PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

Much has been written about Barack's meteoric rise on the national stage. Senator Ted Kennedy decided early in the campaign, in January 2008, to endorse Barack, and he wrote [16]:

Barack inspires me — it's that simple. In the words of President Kennedy: "The world is changing. The old ways will not do... It is time for a new generation of leadership." In Barack, I see that next generation of American leadership: a figure who can transcend the divisions in this country that my family and I have fought so hard to tear down.

We were all moved four years ago as Barack told us a profound truth: We are not red states and blue states, but one United States. Since then, he has matched that rhetoric with action, traveling the country to inspire record turnouts of men and

women of all ages, races, parties and faiths. Barack has forged consensus in the Senate on contentious issues such as immigration and pushed through necessary reforms like the most far-reaching ethics reform in its history.

But I'm not only supporting Barack because of what he has done. What counts in our leadership is not the length of years in Washington, but the reach of our vision, the strength of our beliefs, and that rare quality of mind and spirit that can call forth the best in our country and our people.

The first major decision of a presidential nominee is the selection of his running mate. The choice of Senator Joseph Biden as the vice presidential nominee was a bold one for Barack, considering that Senator Biden did not pull any punches as a primary campaign rival. Barack emphasized, in introducing his running mate, how open he is to critical thinking at the top of his administration.

If elected, Senator Biden would be the first vice president to be a Catholic, following President Kennedy's groundbreaking path of nearly 50 years ago. "My views are totally consistent with Catholic social doctrine," he has said. "There are elements within the church who say that if you are at odds with any of the teachings of the church, you are at odds with the church. I think the church is bigger than that." [17]



Senators Obama and Biden, joined by their wives, Michelle Obama and Jill Biden.

Reuters, used with permission.

Senator Biden has represented Delaware in the Senate since 1972, when he was elected at the age of twenty-nine. He has earned a reputation for working on a bipartisan basis to pass legislation that is deeply consonant with his commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, including the establishment of the United States Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983, The Global Climate Change Act (1987), stopping genocide in Bosnia, Kosovo and Darfur, and the Kids 2000 Act among many others during his 35 years of service as a U.S. Senator.

As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Biden's top foreign policy priority has been bringing home American troops without leaving chaos behind in Iraq. He has played a leading role in Congressional efforts to end genocide in Darfur, Sudan. As a long-standing member and former Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator Biden is a strong leader on crime and drug policy and has been instrumental in crafting almost every major piece of crime legislation over the past two decades. One of Senator Biden's longstanding priorities is making college more accessible and affordable for students and their families. Recently, he introduced the College Affordability and Creating Chances for Educational Success for Students (ACCESS) Act which would increase tax incentives, expand Pell grants, and begin college planning as early as the eighth grade.

He was a product of Catholic schools in Scranton PA, and attended a boys' Catholic high school named Archmere Academy when his family moved to Wilmington, Delaware. He wrote extensively about his Catholic upbringing in his best-selling autobiography, *Promises to Keep* [18]:

From the time I was little I had a picture in my head of the sort of man I wanted to become, a picture filled in by my mom and dad, by the teachings of the Catholic schools I attended, by stories I heard about our family hero, Uncle Bosie, a pilot who was shot down in World War II, and by a faith in the size of my own future. During my adolescent and college years, men and women were changing the country — Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy — and I was swept up in their eloquence, their conviction, the sheer size of their improbable dreams.

He has known significant tragedy in his life. After his upset victory to win his Senate seat in November 1972, his wife and baby daughter were killed in a late-December traffic accident. His sons, Beau and Hunter, were badly injured, and he found himself starting his Senate career as a single parent. He eventually remarried, and has credited his wife, Dr. Jill Biden, with helping give him his life back. They have three children and five grandchildren, and Senator Biden has religiously commuted more than an hour from his home in Delaware to Washington DC his whole career. Senator Ted Kennedy spoke approvingly of Senator Biden at the time of his nomination: “Barack Obama said he wanted a strong independent leader and a strong advocate for average Americans, and he got one in Joe Biden.[19]

CATHOLIC ISSUES

ABORTION IN AMERICAN POLITICS

The abortion issue has become a significant focus of attention for Roman Catholics over the past three U.S. presidential elections. Beginning in 2000, the Republican National Committee embarked on an aggressive, expensive effort to recruit

Catholics away from their traditional home in the Democratic Party. Prior to that, the two political parties were less polarized on the issue. Republican President Gerald Ford was opposed to the criminalization of abortion. Ronald Reagan signed one of the most permissive abortion laws in the country when he was governor of California after a very public and extensive consultation with clergymen, physicians and psychiatrists. George H.W. Bush had long indicated he was “pro-choice” before he ran for president in 1988.

At the time of the 1992 presidential election, it was not acknowledged that abortion rates had already begun a downward trend. The Clinton administration began to draw connections between the risk of HIV infection and unprotected sex, at a time when there was no treatment for AIDS. As a result of a public education campaign that coincided with the Clinton years, sexual practices of young people in the United States changed dramatically; within ten years the abortion rates for white women had fallen by half (from 22 to 11 per thousand reproductive-age women per year). President Clinton talked about making abortion “safe, legal and rare,” and he had a record of effectiveness on the issue.

Although George W. Bush had had a similar history of ambivalent statements about abortion during his gubernatorial campaigns, the issue seemed to acquire a new conservative caché in his frequent nuanced references to abortion during his presidential campaign in 2000. In videotaped remarks to the Christian Coalition that year, he said, “I know good people disagree on this issue, but surely we can agree on ways to value life by promoting adoption and parental notification.” Although he often said that “every child, born and unborn, ought to be protected in law and welcomed into life,”[20] he was often ambiguous when questioned about whether he thought abortion should be illegal. He was asked directly in a Presidential Debate on Oct 13, 2004 in Arizona if he would like to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*. He declined to answer the question, saying only that he would not use a litmus test in selecting judges. In that debate he went on to mirror what came to be Barack Obama’s position today on abortion, saying “Surely there are ways we can work together to reduce the number of abortions: continue to promote adoption laws - that’s a great alternative to abortion. Continue to fund and promote maternity group homes. I will continue to promote abstinence programs.” Then he concluded, “All of us ought to be involved with programs that provide a viable alternative to abortion.”[21]

In terms of legislation, Republicans in Congress pushed through four “anti-abortion” bills during the first Bush term that were explicitly designed to label Democrats as the “pro-abortion party.” These bills included a law restricting the transport by a non-parent of minors across state lines for an abortion, the Partial Birth Abortion ban (2003) and the Unborn Victims of Violence Act (2004). There is no data to suggest that any of these laws have had any measurable affect on the number of abortions in any state, and supporters of these laws didn’t pretend that they would actually affect abortion rates. It is telling that no federal legislation restricting abortion was debated in Congress during the second Bush term. Many of Karl Rove’s critics have suggested that Republicans have little incentive to outlaw abortion, since doing so would remove a major stimulus for political donations and volunteers. Indeed, despite having a plank in their platform every four years since the 1970s supporting a Constitutional ban on abortions, the Republicans have not introduced such legislation in the past 25 years (the 1983 bill was co-sponsored by a Democrat).

After President Bush took office, the Centers for Disease Control moved the publication date for their abortion data to the (post-election) Friday after Thanksgiving, the slowest news day of the year. Consequently, there have been virtually no news stories over the past eight years chronicling the slowing in the progress against abortion, with an actual increase in the 2003 rate and other set-backs that included the first increase in teen pregnancy rates in 15 years in the most recent data.[22]

Once President Bush was in office, Catholic conservatives began having weekly conference calls with Karl Rove, discussing ways to further alienate Catholic Democrats and Independents from the Democratic Party.[23] In 2004, the Bush Campaign invested tens of millions of dollars to pay organizers to register voters in front of Catholic churches, in violation of guidelines put out by the US Bishops that forbid such efforts by political parties. Thousands of volunteers were mobilized to put anti-abortion flyers on car windshields in Catholic church parking lots across the swing states on the Sunday before the election in 2004, contributing to the pro-Bush effort in an election in which the majority of non-Latino Catholics voted for the Republican candidate for the first time since 1988—ironically favoring him over a fellow Catholic.

In the summer of 2004 a seminary ethics professor, Dr. Glen Stassen,

assembled the limited available public data on abortion rates from the first term of the Bush Administration. He published several articles suggesting that President Bush had overseen a reversal in the progress against abortion attained during the Clinton Administration.[24] Anti-abortion groups might have been expected to express concern and to seek greater openness from the Bush Administration about the unavailable national abortion data at the time. But instead the National Right to Life Committee mounted a concerted effort to attack Dr. Stassen personally, calling him a stand-in for the Democrats, and belittling the entire thesis.[25] Dr. Stassen pointed out poignantly that such an attack in response to his findings about abortion rates “separates those who want to reduce abortions from people who want to defend this Republican administration.”[24]

Following the polarizing 2004 election, the Democratic leadership in Congress took a more activist stance in addressing the abortion problem. Representatives Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) fashioned legislation that would dramatically lower abortion rates by addressing the health and economic needs of women and their children. Although the Bush Administration substantially increased funding for “abstinence-only sex education” and a variety of church-sponsored crisis pregnancy centers, in October 2007 President Bush vetoed Democratic prevention legislation that would have explicitly worked through economic measures to decrease abortions.

Currently pending bills sponsored by Congressional Democrats include the *Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Parents Act* (HR 1074, known as the DeLauro-Ryan bill) and the *Prevention First Act bill* (HR 819). Congressional Democrats have also worked on making other alternatives more attractive with the Adoption Promotion Act of 2003 (Public Law No: 108-145), championed by Senator Hillary Clinton. *Democrats for Life* have made an important contribution with their advocacy of the *Pregnant Women Support Act*, a measure encouraged by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It aims to reduce the abortion rate in America by 95 percent in 10 years by enacting the social and economic supports that actually do something to help women avoid this difficult ordeal.



SENATOR OBAMA'S APPROACH TO SOLVING THE ABORTION ISSUE

Senator Barack Obama has consistently opposed the criminalization of abortion throughout his career, but has simultaneously spoken with unwavering conviction about the moral seriousness of the issue and the need to work constructively to address it. He told Catholic Digest in October 2008,

Nobody is pro-abortion. I believe we need to do more to address the underlying factors that may lead a woman to make these heart-wrenching decisions. We should do everything we can to reduce unintended pregnancies and support women who choose to have a child. So we should be focusing on pre- and postnatal care, we should be making adoption far more available. If we can create a situation where young women and young men are acting responsibly and recognize the sacredness of human sexuality, then we can drastically cut the number of abortions. That is something that I intend to work with people from all perspectives on, when I'm president of the United States.

Barack played a personal role in writing the abortion language that was included on this issue in the Democratic platform, which offered solutions to reducing the number of abortions, saying, “We also recognize that such health care and education help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and thereby also reduce the need for abortions. The Democratic Party also strongly supports a woman’s decision to have a child by ensuring access to and availability of programs for pre- and post-natal health care, parenting skills, income support, and caring adoption programs.” This is new language that had not been included in the 2004 Party Platform.



“No one is pro-abortion. I think it’s always a tragic situation.”

— Senator Barack Obama, third presidential debate at Hofstra University, October 15, 2008



In contrast, the Republican Platform Committee very publicly deleted similar language that had “invited all people of good will to work together to reduce the incidence of abortion.” Even as that committee was deliberating on this issue, the Catholics in Alliance announced a new study that offered new evidence supporting a very substantial role for economic measures in reducing abortions in the United States. [26] Another study released the same week by Catholics United demonstrated that if Roe-v-Wade was overturned at some point in the future, the most optimistic estimate for reducing abortions was unlikely to exceed 10%. Moreover, the report suggested that it was more likely there would be no reduction at all.[27] The final Republican Platform reiterates the traditional language supporting passage of a Constitutional amendment banning abortion, and is glaringly silent on economic, health and other measures to reduce abortions.

Some conservatives have focused on legislation by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) in 2007 that would supersede state laws restricting abortion. It is unlikely that such legislation would pass in the next Congress, so the central question remains: Which strategy is more effective in dealing with abortion - criminalization in some states (unlikely to occur for many years even if a reversal of Roe v. Wade is pursued),

or policies to reduce abortions under an Obama administration? It need not be one or the other. Barack has said that, like most Americans, he supports legal restrictions on late-term abortions. Indeed, in most states abortion is already illegal after the age of viability, for instance after 24-weeks in Massachusetts.

REDUCING ABORTION NOW VS CRIMINALIZING IT LATER

The abortion question elicits strong feelings from people on both sides of the issue. Although abortion rates now are as low as they were before Roe-vs-Wade [28], many conservatives contend that somehow reversing that Supreme Court decision will eliminate all abortions. No rationale has ever been offered for this conclusion, and several critical facts are often neglected:

- 1. Some people have suggested that even if President Bush wasn't very effective in decreasing abortions, his use of the bully pulpit to condemn abortion was valuable as a means of changing attitudes about abortion. But ABC News/Washington Post and Gallup polling on attitudes about abortion show no change in public attitudes about abortion between 1996 and 2008.{29} A significant majority of Americans, unchanged during the Bush Presidency, tell pollsters (63% to 33%) that they support the Roe-vs-Wade decision.{30}*
- 2. The argument is often made that the law has a teaching function, and that making abortion illegal will lead people to think it is immoral. But the data convincingly indicate that abortion rates are higher in countries where abortion is illegal.{31}*

3. *Some conservative activists have succeeded in creating very unrealistic expectations among conservative voters the past eight years about what a punishment-based strategy could achieve. For example, a CBS News/NY Times poll three and a half years ago asked, “By the end of George W. Bush’s second term in office, do you think most abortions in the United States will be legal or will most abortions be against the law?” 43% answered that they thought most abortions would be illegal by now.{32}*

4. *The Catholics United study estimated that only 10% of abortion decisions would be affected by new laws in states that are likely to restrict abortion access.{27} 35% of American women live in counties that already have no abortion provider.{28} Women in states likely to legislate against abortion are likely to travel elsewhere or attempt self-induced abortions. Legal pressure for both outcomes is likely to result in later-term abortions, and risk of maternal death related to abortion has been estimated to increase 76-fold when delayed until the second half of pregnancy.{33}*

5. *Many anti-abortion activists have chosen to make the criticism of their opponents very personal, even using Communion as a political weapon. Constitutional scholar and former dean of the Catholic University of America Law School,*

Prof. Douglas Kmiec, is one of the country's most outspoken opponents of abortion. Yet he found himself denied Communion because of his public support for Barack in the spring of 2008. Prof Kmiec was attending a Mass prior to giving a speech to a group of Catholic businessmen, and reported that he was singled out for exclusion from the Eucharist because of his prominence as an Obama supporter.{34} By this standard, anyone who expressed public support for President Bush could be excluded at Communion, given Mr. Bush's support for torture and the Bishops' recent inclusion of torture (along with abortion) in their Faithful Citizenship document as "an intrinsically evil act." {35}

In summary, like most Americans and a plurality of Catholics, Barack believes that constructive measures are the most moral and effective way to solve the abortion problem. He has repeatedly expressed his determination to enact such measures, which were repeatedly vetoed by the Bush Administration.{36} Despite the conventional wisdom, the Democratic approach to abortion has to be broadly considered to be more compatible with a culture of life than the alternative obsession with the dubiously effective drive for criminalization.

STEM CELL RESEARCH AND THE ORIGINS OF LIFE

Barack and Senator McCain hold indistinguishable positions on embryonic stem cell research, which they both support as an avenue toward treating and curing degenerative and other diseases. At one time, this stance appeared to be in conflict with Church teaching about the origins of life. But the technology of stem cell research has changed dramatically in the last four years.[37] In November last year, Cardinal Justin Rigali, chairman of the Committee for Pro-Life Activities at the USCCB, wrote:

Studies published this week in the journals Cell and Science offer new hope for advancing stem cell research and therapies while fully respecting the dignity of human life. Scientists in Japan and Wisconsin used four genes to ‘reprogram’ ordinary adult human cells, creating ‘induced pluripotent stem cells’ (iPS cells). James Thomson, head of the Wisconsin team and the founder of human embryonic stem cell research, says these cells ‘meet the defining criteria’ for pluripotent human embryonic stem cells, ‘with the significant exception that the iPS cells are not derived from embryos.’

Thus the goal sought for years through failed attempts at human cloning — the production of ‘pluripotent’ stem cells that are an exact genetic match to a patient — has been brought within reach by an ethical procedure. This technology avoids the many ethical landmines associated with embryonic stem cell research: it does not clone or destroy human embryos, does not harm or exploit women for

their eggs, and does not blur the line between human beings and other species through desperate efforts to make human embryos using animal eggs. Ian Wilmut, head of the team that cloned 'Dolly' the sheep, now says he is abandoning efforts at human 'therapeutic cloning' to pursue this adult cell reprogramming avenue instead, because it is technically superior as well as 'easier to accept socially.'

The field is moving very quickly. In September 2008, researchers at Harvard and in Japan reprogrammed adult skin cells into embryonic-like stem cells using adenoviruses, which do not pose the same cancer risk as the previously employed retroviruses that integrate into the human genome. Then in October 2008, a Japanese researcher announced he had reprogrammed new stem cells without viruses at all, using genetic elements called plasmids.[38] In addition to the ethical concerns that have helped move the research into non-destructive ways of developing stem cells, scientists have been driven by the considerably reduced cost of the new techniques, which do not involve minor surgery to harvest a woman's eggs.



"I am grateful today for scientists who took up the challenge of finding morally acceptable ways to pursue stem cell research, and for government leaders who have encouraged and funded such avenues. This advance reminds us once again that medical progress and respect for human life are not in conflict; they can and should support and enrich one another for the good of all."{39}

--Cardinal Justin Rigali, Archbishop of Philadelphia



ON THE DEATH PENALTY

Barack and Senator McCain hold indistinguishable positions on the death penalty. Barack told an interviewer for US Catholic, “Throughout my career I have worked strenuously to ensure that the death penalty is only administered fairly and justly. That’s why I joined with law enforcement and civil rights groups to reform a broken system in Illinois that had sent 13 innocent men to death row. But I do believe that there are some crimes that are so heinous that they deserve the death penalty. We also have to work with victims and victims’ families to ensure they are receiving the support and counseling they need when recovering from a violent crime.”

Celebrating the death penalty moratorium that followed the exonerations of the 13 convicts, Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago and currently President of the US Bishops’ Conference, wrote, “Pope John Paul II has pointed out that civilized societies have ways of protecting themselves against criminals short of killing them. . . . We are called in Illinois, with God’s grace, to move beyond vengeance and to end the cycle of violence.”

At that time, Barack proposed mandatory taping of interrogations and confessions as a means of decreasing false convictions and acquittals. The measure was opposed by law enforcement officials and the Democratic governor, but Barack succeeded in gaining unanimous State Senate approval of the bill and in changing the governor’s mind. The Washington Post quoted one of his opponents, the retired Republican chair of the Judiciary Committee, as saying, “Obviously, we didn’t agree all the time, but he would always take suggestions when they were logical, and he was willing to listen to our point of view. And he offered his opinions in a lawyerly way. When he spoke on the floor of the Senate, he spoke out of conviction. You knew that, whether you agreed with him or disagreed with him.”[40]



Senator Obama has proposed a health care plan that will provide insurance coverage for all Americans, both adults and children.

ON THE QUESTION OF HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS

The second presidential debate, on Tuesday October 7, focused on the global economic crisis, and both candidates put healthcare reform at the center of their plans to restore the health of the economy. The word “health” was mentioned 47 times during the debate. But reflecting their starkly different philosophies, the two senators differed dramatically on whether healthcare is a ‘right’ or a personal ‘responsibility.’ Responding to that question, Senator McCain put the onus for health care squarely on the individual. He answered, “It is certainly my responsibility. It is certainly small-business people and others, and they understand that responsibility. American citizens understand that. Employers understand that.”

In contrast, Barack responded, “I think it should be a right for every American. In a country as wealthy as ours, for us to have people who are going bankrupt because they can’t pay their medical bills — for my mother to die of cancer at the age of 53 and have to spend the last months of her life in the hospital room arguing with insurance companies because they’re saying that this may be a pre-existing condition and they don’t have to pay her treatment, there’s something fundamentally wrong about that.”

“I’ve tried to apply the precepts of compassion and care for the vulnerable that are so central to Catholic teachings to my work,

{such as in} making health care a right for all Americans — I was the sponsor in the state legislature for the Bernardin Amendment, named after Cardinal Bernardin, a wonderful figure in Chicago I had the opportunity to work with who said that health care should be a right.”

It is notable that the U.S. Catholic bishops have referred to health care definitively as a human right, writing in their November 2007 document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, that “Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. With an estimated 47 million Americans lacking health care coverage, it is also an urgent national priority.”[35]

During the debate Barack described his health plan in detail, including measures that would result in coverage for all American children. He pointed out that Senator McCain had voted repeatedly against expanding the current Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP) to provide care for all of the 12 million children currently uninsured. Senator McCain offered no response. Senator McCain has been a champion of deregulation in the banking world, arguably at the heart of the global financial crisis, and he declined in that second debate to defend his continued advocacy for similar deregulation of American health care.

In the early October 2008 interview in *Catholic Digest*, Senator Obama said, “I’ve tried to apply the precepts of compassion and care for the vulnerable that are so central to Catholic teachings to my work, {such as in} making health care a right for all Americans -- I was the sponsor in the state legislature for the Bernardin Amendment, named after Cardinal Bernardin, a wonderful figure in Chicago I had the opportunity to work with who said that health care should be a right.”[41]



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“Senator Obama being endorsed by Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey, co-chair of his Catholic Advisory Committee.”

ON THE QUESTION OF PREEMPTIVE WAR AND THE TRAGEDY IN IRAQ

Pope John Paul II labeled the invasion of Iraq as “a tragedy for humanity,” and Pope Benedict XVI has been no less critical. In his World Day of Peace message for 2005, Pope John Paul said that being a Catholic Christian is fundamentally about renouncing violence as a means of resolving conflicts “at any level,” writing:

How can we not think with profound regret of the drama unfolding in Iraq, which has given rise to tragic situations of uncertainty and insecurity for all? To attain the good of peace there must be a clear and conscious acknowledgment that violence is an unacceptable evil and that it never solves problems. “Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings” (John Paul II, Homily at Drogheda, Ireland, 29 September 1979). What is needed is a great effort to form consciences and to educate the younger

generation to goodness by upholding that integral and fraternal humanism which the Church proclaims and promotes. This is the foundation for a social, economic and political order respectful of the dignity, freedom and fundamental rights of each person.

Barack opposed the invasion of Iraq from its inception, and has consistently advocated using negotiation and other peaceful means to resolve conflicts around the world. In contrast, Senator McCain was one of the principal advocates for the invasion of Iraq, arguing publicly the day after the 9/11 attacks that the U.S. should invade Iraq. Whether using inflammatory language with regard to Iran's nuclear threat or escalating the rhetoric surrounding the August war between Russia and Georgia, Senator McCain has acquired a reputation as someone who acts impulsively and would not hesitate to invade Iran in an extension of the Bush Doctrine on preemptive war. In response to a question posed in an interview with US Catholic, Senator McCain responded with a call for immediate retribution, saying, "There would be no



"Violence is a lie, for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity. Violence destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings"

--John Paul II, September 1979



sanctuaries and no mercy." This is the kind of careless Cain-and-Abel response that launched a decade of massive loss of life in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

At the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Barack gave his acceptance speech on the 45th anniversary of the "I have a dream" speech by Rev Martin Luther King Jr. The Obama candidacy is in many ways a fulfillment of America's potential to escape the shadow of the terrible Vietnam War that claimed so many

lives on both sides of the conflict. Dr. King was among the first ardent opponents of the war in Vietnam. One of the memorable lines from his speech in Washington on August 28, 1963 was, “Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate.”

Much of the focus of talk about the U.S. Military is on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but in some respects a much larger issue looms over the next administration. Despite much public hand wringing about Iran and North Korea acquiring nuclear weapons, Senator McCain has supported the Bush Administration’s expensive push to build a new generation of American nuclear warheads. In October 2008, the Bush secretaries of Defense and Energy released a statement entitled, “National Security and Nuclear Weapons in the 21st Century,” in which they laid out a plan to build the “Reliable Replacement Warhead.” Despite the US having declared its intention to work toward elimination of nuclear weapons as a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Bush Defense Department worked for years to develop a new class of strategic nuclear weapons called the “deep earth penetrator.” The implicit threat in the development of these weapons was the intent to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear adversary like Iran, while expressing shock that the Iranians sought to pursue their own nuclear weapons.

Barack gave a remarkable speech in Berlin, before 200,000 people in July 2008, in which he urged the world once again to work in a principled way toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. He said,

This is the moment when we must renew the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. The two superpowers that faced each other across the wall of this city came too close too often to destroying all we have built and all that we love. With that wall gone, we need not stand idly by and watch the further spread of the deadly atom. It is time to secure all loose nuclear

materials; to stop the spread of nuclear weapons; and to reduce the arsenals from another era. This is the moment to begin the work of seeking the peace of a world without nuclear weapons.



Senator Obama addresses a crowd of 200,000 in Berlin, July 2008. "This is the moment to begin the work of seeking the peace of a world without nuclear weapons."

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There is no question that Barack's ideals are much closer to those of Catholic thought on issues of war and peace. In his interview with U.S. Catholic, he said, "I have deep respect for John Paul II and his opposition to the invasion of Iraq back in 2003, and for Pope Benedict's ongoing call for peace, particularly in light of the heinous anti-Christian violence in Iraq, including the murder of the Chaldean archbishop earlier this year. I opposed the invasion of Iraq from the beginning because I feared it would result in an occupation of undetermined length with undetermined consequence." [42]

In contrast, his opponent has been an advocate of more aggressive use of the military, and has ridiculed Barack for his willingness to pursue diplomacy rather than the failed Bush policy of isolating U.S. adversaries. The gap in their respective understanding about the lessons of the Vietnam War is emblematic, with Senator McCain having concluded that more bombing and more killing in Southeast Asia would have brought a brighter future there. On this subject, the Church is clear in its teaching. As Pope John Paul concluded, in 2005, "No man or woman of good will can renounce the struggle to overcome evil with good. This fight can be fought

effectively only with the weapons of love. When good overcomes evil, love prevails and where love prevails, there peace prevails. This is the teaching of the Gospel, restated by the Second Vatican Council: “the fundamental law of human perfection, and consequently of the transformation of the world, is the new commandment of love” (Gaudium et Spes, 38).

BARACK’S LEADERSHIP ON OTHER ISSUES

Some of Barack’s opponents have questioned the depth of his experience, because he was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 2004. But the public is becoming increasingly aware of his several other careers before he electrified Democrats with his 2004 Convention Speech and emerged as a Congressional leader in his freshman term. Like President John Kennedy, Barack is a best-selling author, with his book about his upbringing and his organizing career before going to law school (*Dreams from my Father*) and his prescriptions for “reclaiming the American dream” (*The Audacity of Hope*). After becoming the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review, in 1990, he returned to Chicago and practiced civil rights law. He developed a career as a constitutional law scholar at the University of Chicago for 12 years, and eventually served three terms in the Illinois State Senate, from 1997 to 2004.

As an Illinois State Senator, he had an opportunity to begin acting on many of the priorities he developed when he was an organizer working in the community during the mid-1980s. As a state senator, he helped to pass a law that led to an expansion of early childhood education in Illinois. In the U.S. Senate, he championed the “Success in the Middle” Act, directing federal funds to help raise student achievement in middle school by supporting partnerships with universities and nonprofit groups to develop and implement new education strategies.

With regard to poverty, he helped author the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit legislation. He has spoken about working to cut American poverty in half in ten years, and told U.S. Catholic, “I applaud the campaigns of nongovernmental organizations like Catholic Charities USA, which has pledged to work to cut poverty in half by 2020. The problems of this nation are too large for government or any one group to solve alone. We need all hands on deck.” He has written about the costs to

society of so many black men from minority communities passing through the criminal justice system at some point in their lives. With his background in civil rights law, he has advocated for legislation called the “Second Chance Act,” which would support faith-based and community organizations working to give former prisoners a second chance in life by helping establish transitional jobs programs and assisting with housing, health and education needs.

Acting on health care, Barack introduced legislation in the U.S. Senate in June 2008 that would direct the Centers for Disease Control and other federal health agencies to set up surveillance and monitoring systems and establish new national standards with regard to medical, environmental, social and genetic factors relating to sudden infant death syndrome. After the Federal Trade Commission reported last spring that brand name pharmaceutical companies had struck 14 deals in 2007 that led to delayed sale of cheaper generic drugs, Barack joined several other senators in sponsoring legislation to ban the practice. He co-authored legislation with one of the Senate’s most conservative members, Dr. Tom Coburn, providing for transparency in federal government spending.

With his interest in Soviet nuclear disarmament, dating to his college studies, he sought to play a leading role in stemming the fallout of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. He traveled to Russia in 2005 with Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) to explore issues related to nuclear disarmament in a post-Soviet world. Their subsequent legislation, signed into law in January 2007, sought to expand efforts to detect and obstruct the transfer of fissile materials that could lead to production of nuclear weapons, and also provided a framework for destruction of old Soviet conventional weapons. Barack also joined with Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) to sponsor legislation that requires the Administration to submit a comprehensive plan to account for all the world’s unsecured nuclear materials by 2012. He has taken an expansive view of national security, for instance writing an op-ed piece with Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) in 2005 on the worldwide threat of bird flu.[43]

Barack has a longstanding interest in environmental issues. On October 15, 2008, President Bush signed into law a bill co-authored by Barack that bans exports of elemental mercury. The measure was passed by voice vote in the Senate and by a

vote of 393-5 in the House. The U.S. is currently one of the world's biggest exporter of mercury, a neurotoxin that can cause birth defects, mental retardation and other developmental problems in children. The Mercury Export Ban Act provides for permanent storage of collected mercury by the Department of Energy, and was supported by groups as diverse as the Natural Resources Defense Council, the American Chemistry Council, and the National Mining Association.

THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION AS A FOUNDATION FOR ACTION IN THE WORLD

The Catholic Social Tradition derives from 120 years of papal encyclicals and other expressions of Catholic thought, and has played a central role in helping shape deeply American values like liberty and equality. The Church's involvement was motivated by the inhuman conditions that confronted workers in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. But the Tradition has grown beyond a discussion of the dignity of work to represent the very practical ways that our Catholic faith compels us to work for the common good. Barack expressed it well in a June 2007 speech to a synod of churches in Hartford, "I'm hopeful because I think there's an awakening taking place in America. People are coming together around a simple truth - that we are all connected, that I am my brother's keeper; I am my sister's keeper. And that it's not enough to just believe this - we have to do our part to make it a reality. My faith teaches me that I can sit in church and pray all I want, but I won't be fulfilling God's will unless I go out and do the Lord's work."

Through his own conversion experience, which occurred following a period of working in Catholic parishes on Chicago's South Side, Barack found a new motivation for his good instincts with regard to serving the community. He is by all accounts a devoted husband and father. He and his wife Michelle have been married for 16 years, and have two animated children—Malia Ann, age 10, and Sasha, age 7.



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Catholic Social Teaching, with which Barack became familiar as a young man, has been distilled by different experts into between 6 and 15 individual themes. For simplicity's sake, we have grouped them in four areas that encompass the Catholic religious principles that help to guide human actions in the modern world. The first of these concerns is the *sanctity of human life and the dignity of the person*, principles that Barack deeply supports. He has articulated a new vision for human dignity, that takes into account all its dimensions: freedom from discrimination, mutual support from the earliest stages of life, encouragement in finding dignity through work, and the golden rule of medicine as applied to US foreign policy—*primum non nocere*, first do no harm.

The second area of *Catholic Social Teaching* concerns issues related to the *pursuit of the Common Good*, pursued through a spirit of solidarity among all people but respecting the “subsidiarity” of immediate responsibility to those who most depend on us. In other words, people have an immediate duty to care for their own families, and local governments to look after the needs of their own citizens. In turn, each of those citizens has a responsibility to participate in civic life. *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* says that we are bound as Catholics “to engage in a series of activities by which the citizen...contributes to the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community to which he belongs. Participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and with a view to the common good.”[44] Finally, an essential part of pursuing the common good is a recognition that “much is required from those to whom much is given.”

(Lk 12:48) The Church generally refers to this as “the preferential option for the poor.” The concerns of the poor are a drumbeat of concern for all the prophets and woven through all the Gospels.

The third area is the call to *good stewardship of the environment*. In the era of severe concern about the impact of global warming, particularly on the world’s poorest people, the related issues of energy production and consumption have achieved a paramount significance. The Church has committed the Vatican to helping implement the goals and objectives of the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali. In remarks to the U.N. in February 2008, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, the papal nuncio, spoke of the “personal commitment and numerous public appeals of Pope Benedict XVI, (who has called for) a renewed sense of respect for and the need to safeguard God’s creation.” He told the representatives that the Vatican had already worked to reduce and offset its carbon emissions through the installation of solar panels and involvement with a reforestation project in Hungary.

Finally, the Catholic Social Tradition is deeply invested in the responsibility of all Catholics to foster *peace at all levels of our lives*. Being opposed to the profoundly un-Christian notion of unilateral preemptive war is a starting point. But the Catholic Social Tradition reaches beyond the public and into the private, urging people to be gracious to one another in all their relationships, and particularly in the lives of their families.

FOUR TENETS OF THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION

The subject of the *sanctity of human life and the dignity of the person* compels a careful examination of all the issues surrounding the earliest stages of life. The well-being of children begins in the womb, and it seems strange that there should be any controversy about efforts to support women through their pregnancies in order to help them deliver the healthiest possible babies. The current Administration and the majorities they held in Congress for much of the last eight years made no effort to enact comprehensive prevention legislation that would have had a real effect on abortion rates in the U.S. Indeed, President Bush vetoed such legislation in October 2007,

citing fiscal concerns about the Dept. of Health & Human Services appropriation in which it was contained. Furthermore, the Republican Platform Committee eliminated language in August from their party's electoral roadmap proposing common-sense solutions to dealing with abortion. In contrast, the Democratic Party Platform speaks forcefully about the need to enact constructive measures that respect the dignity of both mothers and their babies. Barack has laid out a new vision for solving the abortion problem, one that empowers individuals and lifts them up in many other related aspects of their lives.

At the same time, the sanctity of life is an issue that reaches far beyond pregnancy, stretches around the globe, and encompasses all of life. Some conservatives have sought to devalue some lives by judging them to be less worthy than others. Frequently heard is the phrase "innocent life," which by its nature involves a moral judgment. Individuals who have been to prison, for instance, are judged as being less worthy of respect and protection. Children who live in Iraq, two million of whom have been displaced from their homes, have been previously deemed less worthy of protection than children in America. The astonishing sums being invested in the 2008 financial crisis dwarf what would be required to feed all those who are hungry in South Asia and Saharan Africa, or to treat the churning epidemic of HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa.

The echoes of Matthew 25 are heard in this litany, perhaps expressed best by Dr. King in a sermon delivered at his home church in Atlanta on February 4, 1968, as he imagined his own funeral a few months later:

I'd like somebody to mention, that day, that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say, that day, that Martin Luther King tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day that I tried to be right on the war question.... I want you to say that I did try to feed the hungry. And I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my

life to clothe those who were naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity. Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace.

It is not for us, in the Christian moral sense, to judge who is innocent and who among us is worthy of respect. Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, then the archbishop of Washington, said at a rally for the rights of immigrants in 2006, “We are in a historic moment in our nation’s history. Let us not now turn inward after all these centuries. We are all God’s children, all brothers and sisters in His one human family.” The sanctity of life and the dignity of the individual are very much bound up in respect for one another, regardless of race or social circumstance; having the opportunity to discover the pride of accomplishment in the dignity of our work; and acting individually and collectively to assure that all our fellow human beings “have life, and have it abundantly.” (John 10:10) Or as Barack said in his memorable speech on race, Tuesday March 18, 2008 in Philadelphia:

I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together — unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction — towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren...In the end, then, what is called for is nothing

more, and nothing less, than what all the world's great religions demand – that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us. Let us be our brother's keeper, Scripture tells us. Let us be our sister's keeper. Let us find that common stake we all have in one another, and let our politics reflect that spirit as well.

The *pursuit of the common good* is very much at the heart of Barack's life story, as detailed in the second section of this book. Jerry Kellman, Barack's first mentor in Chicago, is a Catholic who introduced Barack to a Catholic worldview. In describing the genesis of Barack's coming to a relationship with God, Mr. Kellman said, "With his strong bond in the African-American community in Chicago, he has been able to express his beliefs in a community drenched in religion. We find God together as a people and Barack brought the faith perspective of having found God first in the community." [5] In the book *The Faith of Barack Obama*, Stephen Mansfield describes the early religious awakening that Barack experienced. Working as a community organizer among many church leaders, he found himself frequently being asked what his own faith perspective was. Having been raised in an agnostic home, attending a Catholic religious school only briefly at a young age, and then being schooled in secular institutions through adulthood, Barack had never formally studied religion. But he had a powerful experience one Sunday, at the invitation of a friend, when he heard a sermon entitled "The Audacity of Hope" at Trinity United Church of Christ, [45] a faith community descended from New England's 17th Century Puritans. As Barack insists in almost every speech he has given, "I am my brother's keeper, and I am my sister's keeper."

But his concern for the common good is more than just rhetorical. He has enunciated policies dedicated to rescuing the American health care system from the inefficiencies and inequities have left us paying more than twice as much as citizens of any other developed country, for a standard of health that in several studies is more error-prone and of lower quality than many of the countries of the European Union. [46]

Barack's pledge to double the NIH biomedical research budget over ten years, including new support for ethically sound stem cell research, will help alleviate the continued suffering of those with inherited and chronic diseases.[47] He introduced legislation this year entitled the "Enhancing Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education Act of 2008" that would establish a STEM Education Committee within the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to coordinate the efforts of federal agencies engaged in STEM education. Improved education helps build the common good, but also contributes ultimately to the dignity of work.[47] In a commencement address in June 1963, President John Kennedy said, "All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents." Providing equality of opportunity is an essential part of working for the common good, and Barack Obama's historic candidacy has been acclaimed as a watershed moment in its achievement.

Good stewardship of the environment is becoming more and more of an ethical imperative, as the evidence continues to accumulate that global warming is man-made and may be increasingly irreversible. The Bush Administration's walking away from the Kyoto Protocol largely paralyzed global efforts to halt harmful emissions, and President Bush refused to make any commitments during the G8 Summit that addressed the subject in Japan last July.

In addition to its role in national security and the U.S. economic crisis, energy utilization is very much at the heart of environmental concerns related to global warming. Senator McCain has focused his campaign on pushing for new offshore drilling rights, even though oil companies currently have access to millions of untapped square miles of potential drilling sites. Estimated U.S. oil reserves equal only 3% of the remaining world oil supply, but American oil consumption is about 25% of total world consumption. In his October 2008 interview with U.S. Catholic, Barack addressed the urgency of the issue:

There is a moral component to ensuring we are being good stewards of God's creation, and I admire Pope Benedict's leadership on this

issue and his recent advocacy for better care of our environment. As president I will rally new coalitions to confront the challenge of global climate change and conservation of our natural resources. I will create a bipartisan consensus to implement a cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the level top scientists have recommended.

I will also ensure that the United States regains international leadership on the climate change issue by creating a Global Energy Forum of the world's top emitters and re-engaging the United States into the post-Kyoto treaty negotiations. I firmly believe that together we can tackle this great challenge and ensure that we are responsible stewards of the environment for future generations.

Peace at all levels of our lives is a concern with which all Americans are grappling. There is a silent epidemic of stress that people feel hearing night after night of bombings in Iraq, and news of the despair in Afghanistan takes its toll on both children and adults. As the parent of young children, Barack is aware of how current world events impose unintended consequences on everyone. One subject that has received little attention in this highly contentious campaign is the growing incivility of the negative campaigning, and a lack of candor by the Republican candidates. There is no escaping the fact that negative campaigning works. But in the first and third presidential debates, for instance, there was little question that Barack had the upper hand with regard to respect for the truth and civility of tone as measures of the candidates' self-confidence.

Over and over, Senator McCain seemed unconcerned with the facts. He spoke of increased offshore oil drilling as a “short-term solution to high gas prices,” when he knows experts have indicated that the 10-20 year delay in realizing such leases and the smallness of US reserves guarantee that increased drilling cannot possibly impact US gas prices in the short-term. He spoke of building 45 new nuclear reactors and generating 700,000 new jobs, when not a single new reactor has been built anywhere in the US in dozens of years. He said wrongly that Barack plans to raise income taxes on people earning as little as \$42,000 per year, despite Barack’s having repeated hundreds of times that no one making less than \$250,000 per year would see their income taxes rise. Senator McCain repeated twice that Afghanistan hearings had never been held by a subcommittee Senator Obama chairs, despite the fact that responsibility for Afghanistan does not reside with that subcommittee. He accused Senator Obama of voting for a bill providing tax breaks for oil companies, when in fact the measure in question increased oil company taxes by \$300 million. He said “earmarks” had tripled in value over the past five years, when in fact they have fallen over the past three years. The New York Times labeled only one factual error by Senator Obama, when at the end of the debate he said that China held \$1 trillion in US debt, but this depended on how the debt was defined.

More troubling was the obvious contempt with which Senator McCain treated Senator Obama, numbingly repeating the construction “Senator Obama doesn’t understand...” as if his lobbyist-heavy campaign staff had urged him to belittle Barack’s capacity for judgment at every opportunity. Senator McCain made virtually no eye contact with Barack during the three 90-minute debates, including when they shook hands at the end of the first. Senator McCain never once used the word “Barack” during the debates.

In contrast, Senator Obama repeatedly addressed his remarks to his adversary by his first name. He refused to condemn Senator McCain’s reversal on the torture legislation last year, instead applauding the older senator’s earlier opposition. He offered no *ad hominem* attacks based on Senator McCain’s health or age or poor school performance or previous misstatements of the facts, and demonstrated no hostility toward his rival. These lapses of civility made Senator McCain look insecure, despite

all the adversity he has battled in his life.

In subsequent days, news reports showed angry crowds attending events that featured the Republican vice presidential nominee, shouting vulgar insults at Barack. When candidates elicit this kind of response from their supporters, or treat one another with disrespect, they seem disrespectful of the sensibilities of all the people—including young children—watching their behavior at home. Robert Kennedy recognized this kind of misdirected ardor when he wrote in 1964, in *The Pursuit of Justice*, “What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their causes, but what they say about their opponents.”

On a broader front, Barack has spoken about the brokenness of families in America, particularly in minority communities. He has talked about finding ways to bring fathers back into the lives of their children in two-household families. His determination to use peaceful means to resolve international conflict has been a model for a greater civility within American politics. With a few notable exceptions, Barack has set out for the first time in two generations to create a different kind of campaign that appeals to people’s civility rather than to their fears. In this vein, it’s valuable to remember Robert Kennedy’s first campaign speech, in March 1968, when he said:

The Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education, or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country; it measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile. And it can tell us everything

about America except why we are proud that we are Americans.

An improbable campaign has soared from the humble origins of a tiny office in a Catholic rectory in Chicago. A man with no religious training worked among Catholic priests, sisters and laymen, who ministered to the poorest people in that great city. Barack has lived a life consonant with the Catholic Social Tradition, and in the process suffered the insults of those who thought he was too close to the Catholics—and now of some conservative Catholics who think his vision is too distant from theirs. But his message of reconciliation—in U.S. relations with the world, amidst the longstanding battles over abortion, between people of different races and economic levels—is one that hasn't been heard in a generation, and rings true now for people across the political spectrum and from all the American religious traditions.

In his speech claiming the Democratic nomination, in St. Paul MN on June 3, 2008, Barack said simply:

The journey will be difficult. The road will be long. I face this challenge with profound humility, and knowledge of my own limitations. But I also face it with limitless faith in the capacity of the American people. Because if we are willing to work for it, and fight for it, and believe in it, then I am absolutely certain that generations from now, we will be able to look back and tell our children that this was the moment when we began to provide care for the sick and good jobs to the jobless; this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal; this was the moment when we ended a war and secured our nation and restored our image as the last, best hope on Earth.

This was the moment — this was the time — when we came together to remake this great nation so that it may always reflect our very best selves, and our highest ideals. Thank you, God Bless you, and may God Bless the United States of America.

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4. According to an account in the *New York Times* of his four years in New York, Barack accepted a position with Business International Corporation, a 250-employee newsletter-publishing and research firm that helped international American companies understand overseas markets. He worked as a researcher and writer for a reference service, called Financing Foreign Operations, and also wrote for a newsletter entitled Business International Money Report. 18-months out of college he left for a position with the New York Public Interest Group, a student-directed organization based on the campuses of the State University of New York and City University of New York campuses. He worked as a project coordinator, based at City College in Harlem, and organized students to address issues related to mass transit, environmental issues and education issues. He made less than \$10,000 a year to mobilize student volunteers on education-related issues. He was hired and supervised by Eileen Hershenov, who told me in an interview, "I have a distinct memory of having several conversations with Barack during that short period about different models of organizing. A number of books were appearing by former organizers with groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and we talked about the pros and cons of these organizing strategies and how they built lasting movements for change. Barack was interested in learning about organizing, in doing it and thinking about it, to effect bottom-up change that was meaningful, and outlasted any particular leaders." In his book, *The Audacity of Hope*, Barack describes his first trip to Washington, taking a group of New York college students to meet with their Congressional representatives about Reagan-era plans for cuts in student loans.
5. Bradford, R., *Hiring Barack Obama*, in *Busted Halo*. 2008.
6. Jerry Kellman worked for Catholic Charities and with Catholic parishes in inner city neighborhoods for a number of years before returning to school for a Master's degree in journalism at Northwestern and post-graduate work in public policy at the University of Chicago, prior to meeting Barack Obama.
7. Pilsen was the port of entry for Mexican immigrants, and Chicago continues to be home to the largest community of Mexican immigrants outside the Southwest. Mr. Kellman had nearly finished his graduate degree when he was offered a job by one of the Jesuits he had known, Gregory Galluzzo. Employed by the Latino Institute, Mr. Kellman helped Mr. Galluzzo train community organizers in Latino neighborhoods throughout the city to work with Catholic churches. This resulted in the United Neighborhood Organization (UNO), the city's first church-based city-wide Latino organization.
8. There was a long history of Catholic parishes in Chicago being involved with the needs of the poor and social justice. Monsignor Jack Egan had inspired a generation of priests and lay persons to work in the inner city, and he helped shape the role that the Archdiocese of Chicago has long had as a leader in social justice advocacy. The Catholic Action Movement-motivated by its motto, "See, Judge, Act"-became deeply rooted in Chicago through the Christian Family Movement.
9. To hear a Jan 2008 interview with Fr. Mahon and co-author Nancy Davis: 20080125-CCOF.mp3
10. The row houses in Roseland, around Holy Rosary Church, had been constructed after the Civil War by George Pullman for the employees who built his passenger carriages for the Pullman Palace Car Company. A severe economic recession in late 1893 led to wage cuts, in the face of sustained

- high rents in the company housing, and the workers embarked on a strike against Pullman in May 1894. A month later, the strike against Pullman spread nationwide. As an appeasement to growing unrest among workers across the country, Congress passed a resolution on June 28, 1894, announcing the first national Labor Day. But within a week, President Grover Cleveland sent troops into the Roseland neighborhood to suppress the Pullman Strike, with widespread violent resistance that peaked on July 4, 1894, a few blocks away from the present Holy Rosary Church.
11. The assistant bishop who oversaw that cluster of parishes was a dynamic young African-American prelate named Wilton Gregory, a convert to Catholicism when he was a student at the nearby St. Carthage Catholic School to the north. Bishop Gregory had been ordained just prior to Barack's arrival, as the nation's youngest bishop, by Chicago's Cardinal Bernardin. Bishop Gregory oversaw the needs of these struggling churches in Vicariate 6 of the Archdiocese of Chicago, where Barack was laboring. In later years Bishop Gregory went on to become the first black president of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, and is currently the Archbishop of Atlanta.
 12. CTU had been founded just 16 years earlier when three religious communities came together with a vision that mirrored the reform spirit of Vatican II. But in 1985, when Barack arrived, CTU was in the process of becoming the largest Roman Catholic school of theology and ministry in North America, encompassing training for 32 separate religious orders and ultimately producing more than 3500 graduates (nearly 20% of all order priests in the US).
 13. In early 2007, Jerry Kellman began organizing again, working on social justice issues confronting the homeless, and with churches that have created rotating shelters hosted by Catholic and Protestant churches, and synagogues, and investing in health and treatment of addiction. He has also started working on issues related to advocacy for the elderly.
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