



THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

**Statement of Monsignor Martin T. Laughlin
Administrator of the Diocese of Charleston**

CHARLESTON, S.C. (November 14, 2008) - This past week, the Catholic Church's clear, moral teaching on the evil of abortion has been pulled into the partisan political arena. The recent comments of Father Jay Scott Newman, pastor of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Greenville, S.C., have diverted the focus from the Church's clear position against abortion. As Administrator of the Diocese of Charleston, let me state with clarity that Father Newman's statements do not adequately reflect the Catholic Church's teachings. Any comments or statements to the contrary are repudiated.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions." The Catechism goes on to state: "In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path; we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church."

Christ gives us freedom to explore our own conscience and to make our own decisions while adhering to the law of God and the teachings of the faith. Therefore, if a person has formed his

Office of the Administrator

119 Broad Street · Charleston, South Carolina 29401
Post Office Box 818 · Charleston, South Carolina 29402 · Phone (843) 958-2150 · Fax (843) 958-2152

or her conscience well, he or she should not be denied Communion, nor be told to go to confession before receiving Communion.

The pulpit is reserved for the Word of God. Sometimes God's truth, as is the Church's teaching on abortion, is unpopular. All Catholics must be aware of and follow the teachings of the Church.

We should all come together to support the President-elect and all elected officials with a view to influencing policy in favor of the protection of the unborn child. Let us pray for them and ask God to guide them as they take the mantle of leadership on January 20, 2009.

I ask also for your continued prayers for me and for the Diocese of Charleston.

Office of the Administrator

119 Broad Street · Charleston, South Carolina 29401
Post Office Box 818 · Charleston, South Carolina 29402 · Phone (843) 958-2150 · Fax (843) 958-2152