



DIOCESE OF DES MOINES

PRESSRELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: November 22, 2011

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Bishop elected to chair USCCB committee

Bishop Pates to head Committee on International Justice and Peace

Des Moines Bishop Richard Pates was voted by his fellow bishops on Nov. 14 to chair the Committee on International Justice and Peace for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops .

The committee assists the bishops, both collectively and individually, in advancing the social mission of the Church on international justice and peace through policy development, advocacy, education, outreach and acts of ecclesial solidarity.

The committee advises the bishops on international public policy issues as well, especially integral human development, human rights, religious freedom and peace.

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to serve the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in this capacity,” said Bishop Pates. “Along with other bishop members and consultants to the International Justice and Peace Committee, the committee seeks to establish relationships of solidarity especially with our sister Churches in Africa, Latin America and Asia.”

The mandate of the committee includes international policy, advocacy, justice and peace concerns, solidarity with the Church in other countries, outreach to dioceses on international issues, and international dimensions of education on Catholic social teaching, said Dr. Stephen M. Colecchi, Director of the Office of International Justice and Peace.

Colecchi also provided priorities of the committee in the near future:

- Preserving U.S. poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance to reduce global poverty;
- Promoting international interreligious freedom (especially where people of faith are being persecuted or discriminated against);
- Promoting peace in the Holy Land (a two-state solution with security and recognition for Israel and a viable and independent state for Palestine);
- Providing moral guidance regarding the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as the U.S. seeks to end these wars responsibly.

“I recently experienced the impact that our relationships with our sister Churches has,” Bishop Pates noted. “At the conclusion of a recent visit to Cote d’Ivoire, the General Secretary of the Ivorian Bishops Conference emphatically stated to me, “I finally have a strong realization of what the words *Unam* (one) and *Catholicam* (catholic, universal) mean when we describe the Catholic Church.”

In the coming year tentative plans for solidarity visits on the part of committee members will take them to Venezuela, Cuba, Egypt, Holy Land and Africa, possibly to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Bishop Pates became chair of the Committee at the conclusion of the meeting of bishops in Baltimore.

The bishop became chair immediately because Archbishop Edwin O’Brien, who was elected chairman-elect in 2010, will not assume the position due to Pope Benedict XVI having appointed him Pro-Grand Master of the Equestrian Order (Knights) of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem.

“The work of the Conference’s International Justice and Peace Committee grows steadily more relevant as we experience the ongoing evolution of our world into a global neighborhood,” Bishop Pates said.

The Diocese of Des Moines includes 82 parishes in 23 counties in central and southwest Iowa.