

Policy Recommendation on Contracts for Church Construction

The ad hoc committee was established to review the Archdiocesan policy statement on contracts for major new construction projects. The committee was composed of Commission members and representatives of various sectors of the construction industry. The committee reviewed the policy in light of Catholic social justice teaching as applied to our current experience in the Archdiocese of Louisville.

While recognizing that "among the basic rights of the human person must be counted the right of freely founding labor unions," the committee recognized that "every group must take into account the needs and legitimate aspirations of every other group." The review was initiated with a growing appreciation of the "sublime dignity of the human person" as "image of God." This dignity required our acknowledgment of the importance of persons over created things.

Guidelines

After lengthy deliberation and with a recognition that the dignity of labor and the rights of workers have long been a concern of Catholic social thought, we recommend the following construction policy guidelines:

1. "The church fully supports the rights of workers to form unions or other associations to secure their rights to fair wages and working conditions;" however, such organization is not seen presently as an absolute necessity for church construction projects so long as just conditions of employment are established and maintained.
 2. In order that just conditions of employment be established and maintained, the contractor must provide for:
 - A. Just Wages and Adequate Benefits for the workers. To insure the adequacy of wages and benefits, the Chancery shall compare the wages and benefits paid by the contractor to the current wages and benefits that have been established for the area by the Kentucky Department of Labor.
 - B. Non-Discriminatory Employment Practices to prevent and eliminate the effects of injustice.
 - C. Adequate Safety Practices and Procedures to protect the worker.
 - D. Furnishing the Chancery (1) a complete list of all wages and fringe benefits applicable to its employees, and (2) copies of written procedures, developed with participation by the employees, and all amendments thereto, (a) for processing and resolution of employee and employer grievances, (b) for disciplinary actions and (c) for termination of employment.
 3. Responsibility of workers: In return for just conditions of employment the workers, both individually and collectively, have the obligation to provide their employer with an honest effort and to perform their services in an artisan-like manner.
 4. Specific contractual application of these guidelines should be administered and reviewed by the Chancery through the establishment of prequalification processes and procedures for all architects and contractors. That procedure and these guidelines shall be included in the specifications for all relevant projects. Adequate notice must be given to assure sufficient time for qualified contractors to enter their bids.
- The Chancery will develop enforcement practices and procedures, including remedial provisions, to assure continued compliance of the contractors with the policy guidelines.
5. Application of the principles contained in these guidelines should apply to all contractors and vendors doing business with the Archdiocese and should apply to the Archdiocese as direct employer.