



WHY ADVOCATE LOCALLY

Local advocacy for those in our community is essential. People who are poor and vulnerable—struggling to make ends meet, who are homeless, mentally ill, addicted to drugs, isolated, disabled, elderly, without others to care for them—are human beings, children of God. They are not simply faceless statistics or interesting stories for the media. We see them in our communities. Some are in our parishes or turn to our churches for help.

Local governments regularly make key decisions that can enhance the lives of these, the least among us, or make their lives more difficult. Through creativity, compassion, and collaboration, the Justice and Advocacy Council seeks to establish just communities through working with local leaders. We create a just and caring society when we build just and caring communities.

JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Justice and Advocacy (J&A) Council of Montgomery County is comprised of parishioners from the nearly 40 Catholic parishes in the county who are committed to establishing and maintaining just and caring communities.

The J&A Council seeks to collaborate with government officials and partner agencies to fulfill our commission to “bring good news to the poor, liberty to the captives, new sight to the blind, and to set free the downtrodden” (Luke 4:18),

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COUNCILS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

Based on Scripture and Catholic Social Teaching, the Justice and Advocacy Councils of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington work to create a just society by advocating for the needs of poor and vulnerable people at the county level. Rooted in the parishes, the Councils give Catholics of the Archdiocese a way to advocate for justice at the local level where many decisions are made that affect the poor and vulnerable.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

The Justice and Advocacy Council of Montgomery County collaborates with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington as an outreach arm to promote social justice.

WHY BE INVOLVED WITH JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY?

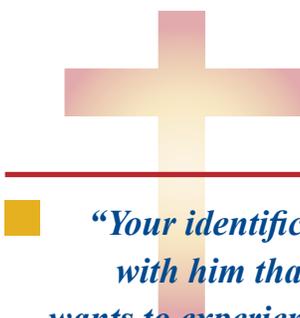
Catholic social teaching makes clear that the role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good. Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith based on the Church’s understanding of human life and dignity.



The Justice and Advocacy Councils seek and support public policies and budgets that recognize and respect the value of each person, including the vulnerable and defenseless. We work for policies and budgets that reduce the division between rich and poor and help create a just and peaceful community for the common good.

We gather nearly monthly to discuss local issues and to plan our advocacy efforts through public testimony at public meetings, issue forums, and through letter writing and email campaigns. We welcome you to join our efforts.

For more information and to contact us, please see the information on the reverse side of this brochure. We look forward to hearing from you.



■ ***“Your identification with Christ and his will involves a commitment to build with him that kingdom of love, justice and universal peace. Christ himself wants to experience this with you, in all the efforts and sacrifices that it entails, but also in all the joy and enrichment it brings. You cannot grow in holiness without committing yourself, body and soul, to giving your best to this endeavor.”***

~ Pope Francis, Rejoice and Be Glad, no. 25

**KEY THEMES OF
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

The J&A Council is guided by the seven key principles of Catholic social teaching. We do not speak as Democrats or Republicans, but as Catholics. This is because we are guided by Catholic social and moral teaching. At the heart of this is the “Life and Dignity of the Human Person”. It is rather invigorating to start with the human person, and that’s what Catholics do.

The key themes of the social and moral teaching of the Church include the following:

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person.** Human life is sacred and must be protected. Every person has God-given dignity.
- **Call to Family, Community and Participation.** Strong families are the cornerstone of our communities and need to be nurtured. We are called to participate in community life and work for the common good.
- **Rights and Responsibilities.** Our rights as human persons call us to be responsible members of society. We are called to care for others.
- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.** The test of a just society is how the poor and vulnerable are treated. We are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
- **The Dignity and Rights of Workers.** Workers should be treated fairly and justly compensated for their labors.
- **Solidarity.** We are one human family and called to love and respect our neighbor, despite racial, ethnic, national, or economic differences.
- **Care for God’s Creation.** We show our respect for our Creator by our stewardship of creation and care for the environment where we live.

For more information about these themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

[www.USCCB.ORG/SDWP/PROJECTS/
SOCIALTEACHING/EXCERPT.SHTML](http://www.USCCB.ORG/SDWP/PROJECTS/SOCIALTEACHING/EXCERPT.SHTML)

With other advocacy groups, the J&A Council supported legislation to:

- combat housing discrimination;
- increase access to Working Families Income Supplement;
- increase transparency in policing;
- increase funding for Developmental Disabilities;
- enact the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act.

The J&A Council testifies each year before the County Council on budget priorities for the poor and vulnerable.

The J&A Council hosted a forum on low-income housing, attended by all five County Executive candidates—and over 300 voters.

The J&A Council hosted a forum on the shortage of low-income housing in the county and on health care and mental health issues for low income and those with special needs, attended by the 14 candidates for the at-large seats on the County Council.

*The Montgomery County Justice and
Advocacy Council generally meets the
fourth Wednesday of each month by Zoom.*

All are welcome.

For more information, contact

JusticeandAdvocacyCouncilmoco@gmail.com



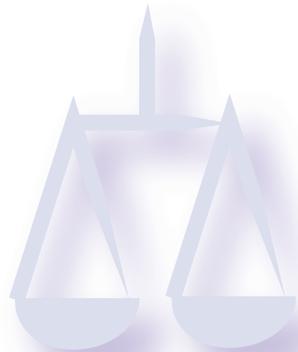
**JUSTICE & ADVOCACY
COUNCIL**

**Montgomery County
Maryland**

■ *Advocating for the needs
of the poor and vulnerable in
Montgomery County*

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
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