



**Weekly Update from the Missouri Catholic
Conference** **October 9, 2020**

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Pope Francis Issues New Encyclical on the Fraternity of All Men and Women



Pope Francis issued a [new encyclical this week called *Fratelli Tutti* \(all brothers\)](#), in which he calls upon all of us to recognize the humanity and fraternity of others, seeing them as our brothers and sisters, part of the one human family. "In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seem

an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat." (*Fratelli Tutti*, No. 30)

The encyclical describes many of the ills facing the modern world and laments our failure

as an international community to truly address them. Archbishop Jose Gomez, President of the USCCB, welcomed the Pope's new work, stating "[i]n analyzing conditions in the world today, the Holy Father provides us with a powerful and urgent vision for the moral renewal of politics and political and economic institutions from the local level to the global level, calling us to build a common future that truly serves the good of the human person." [For the Archbishop's full statement, click here.](#)

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Gulf Coast Braced for Another Devastating Storm, Fires Continue to Ravage California



Areas ravaged by Hurricane Laura in late August are bracing for yet another dangerous storm, Hurricane Delta. Delta is expected to make landfall today on the Gulf Coast as a Category 3 hurricane, bringing with it the possibility of life-threatening storm surge, damaging winds and flooding from Louisiana and east Texas to Mississippi.

Delta is a historic storm in a number of ways, including its rapid intensification from a tropical storm to (at one time) a Category 4 hurricane, as [detailed in this article](#). It's the 10th hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. this season.

While storms threaten the Gulf Coast, wildfires continue to burn at historic levels in California. The August Complex fire, which has been burning for months now, has been classified as a "gigafire," the first of its kind in California's modern history. The classification of a gigafire is reserved for blazes that burn at least one million acres, and hasn't been used since the Taylor Complex fire whipped its way through Alaska in 2004. [Read more about the recent fires here.](#) Our prayers are with those in Delta's path and those fighting the deadly wildfires in California.

image via The Weather Channel

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Amy Coney Barrett Confirmation Set to Begin October 12



The Senate Judiciary Committee has formally scheduled the confirmation hearings for Supreme Court Nominee Amy Coney Barrett. The hearings will begin on October 12 and could last through October 15. The committee will likely implement health and safety protocols for the hearing, including allowing members to appear remotely, due to the ongoing pandemic.

Barrett has been meeting with Senators from both parties in preparation for the hearings. As we have previously reported, Barrett's confirmation hearings are expected to be contentious, with some committee members already raising questions about her Catholic faith and raising concerns about holding the hearings this close to a presidential election.

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Do Car Seats Lower Birth Rates?



Though we know the benefits of mandating car seats for the safety of our children, have they unintentionally limited the number of children families choose to have? According to a recent study, the answer may be yes. In a paper titled, "Car Seats as Contraception," professors Jordan Nickerson and David H. Solomon concluded that car seat laws led to 145,000 fewer births between 1980 and 2017. The researchers found that laws raising the age for when a child must use a car seat significantly raised the cost of having a third child, as many cars cannot fit three seats in the back. The timing of these laws also largely coincides with the falling of American birth rates.

The American total fertility rate has been consistently decreasing over the past couple of decades, falling to an all-time low in 2019 of 1.7 children per woman of childbearing age. During this time, researchers have tried to identify the causes behind this decrease. Journalist Jonathan V. Last discussed the many factors, including the expense of car seats, influencing America's declining birth rate in his 2013 book, *What to Expect When No One's Expecting*. [Last recently discussed his book with the MCC as part of our 2020 Virtual Annual Assembly](#). We highly encourage our members to listen to this podcast to learn more about the falling birth rate and its consequences on society.

[image via Flickr](#)

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44th Annual Respect Life Convention: Walking with Moms!



As we mentioned in a previous edition of MCC Weekly Update, October is Respect Life Month! Many events celebrating life have gone virtual this year, including the [44th Annual Respect Life Convention: Walking with Moms!](#)

The event will be livestreamed from the Ritz-Carlton in St. Louis on Sunday, October 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Organizers encourage planning small family, school, parish or pro-life group "Convention Watch Parties" by signing up for an individual/family or parish/group virtual live-stream or premium package (which also includes 30-day access to the Convention videos).

The exciting lineup of speakers include Auxiliary Bishop of St. Louis Most Rev. Mark S. Rivotuso, David Bereit (Founder, 40 Days for Life and former MCC Annual Assembly Keynote Speaker), Dr. James Sherley (Associate Scholar, Charlotte Lozier Institute & Founder, Asymmetrex LLC) and more.

Visit the Facebook event page for more information or [register for the event here today!](#)

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Our Lady of Guápulo Featured on 2020 USPS Christmas Stamp



Christmas Day is still a season away, but many are thinking ahead to the holiday season, including the United States Postal Service, which will release a new traditional Christmas stamp later this month. The stamp depicts an ornate image, painted by an unknown artist in Cuzco, Peru, of Our Lady of Guápulo. In the painting, Our Lady is holding the infant Jesus. The beautiful work of art is from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. [Read more about this special stamp from Catholic News Service today!](#)

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