

**Testimony to Cincinnati Finance Committee in Support of an Increase to the  
Human Services Fund**

**June 2016**

**Bernie Young, Catholic Social Action Commission**

Good evening. My name is Bernie Young. I am a member of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Social Action Commission and a parishioner at the Church of the Resurrection in Bond Hill. On behalf of the Archdiocese, I want to express our support for the proposed increase to the City Human Services Fund in the FY2017 budget. Since its establishment, the Archdiocese has applauded the Human Services Policy of dedicating 1.5% of General Fund revenues to strengthen worthy organizations addressing the critical needs of the poor and vulnerable in the city. Last year, this fund empowered 34 initiatives to increase gainful employment and reduce homelessness. This has included our Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program and many other agencies with which we've partnered to advance such priorities.

We believe that budgets are moral documents. Our Catholic bishops have established three fundamental criteria for discerning the morality of budget decisions:

1. Every budget decision should be assessed by whether it protects or threatens human life and dignity.
2. A central moral measure of any budget proposal is how it affects the lives and dignity of "the least of these" (Matthew 25). The needs of those who are hungry and homeless, without work or in poverty should come first.
3. Government and other institutions have a shared responsibility to promote the common good of all, especially ordinary workers and families who struggle to live in dignity in difficult economic times.

This Human Services Fund has suffered major cut backs over the years, and we are grateful for the Mayor and City Council's commitment to incrementally increase it closer to the full level called for by the city policy. The proposed additional \$250,000 this year to this roughly \$3 million line item will represent yet another step in the right direction.

Thank you for considering our position and moral principles for this important decision.