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**TO:** Priests, Deacons, Parishes, Curia Staff, Advisory Council Members

**FROM:** Department of Communications

**DATE:** October 11, 2024

**RE:** Archbishop Vigneron, Michigan Catholic Conference Respond to Social Media Video Featuring Governor Gretchen Whitmer

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*The Department of Communications shares statements from Archbishop Vigneron and the Michigan Catholic Conference regarding a recent social media video featuring Governor Gretchen Whitmer:*

**Archbishop Vigneron:**

“The Michigan Catholic Conference (MCC) serves as the official voice of the Catholic Church in Michigan on matters of public policy, facilitating the Church’s civil engagement with elected leaders and supporting the work of the bishops in the seven dioceses of Michigan. I am grateful that in that role, they have provided [this clear and uncompromising response](#) to the recent video featuring our governor.

“It is our responsibility as faithful citizens to participate in the political order in light of the teachings of Christ and the Church, engaging with each other and with our elected officials in a way that expresses our concerns in charity—Christian love—while upholding the inherent dignity of each person. Both St. Peter and St. Paul admonish the early Christians to pray for those in civil leadership who, by God’s providence, have become his stewards of the common good in our communities. Let

us pray for our governor, that her public service would always reflect this reality, including a commitment to religious liberty and promoting a culture of respect for all faiths.”

### **Michigan Catholic Conference:**

A video posted yesterday to social media platform Instagram featuring Governor Gretchen Whitmer has prompted the state’s Catholic bishops conference to express profound disappointment and offense taken at the actions in the video. In the skit, Whitmer lays a Dorito chip on the extended tongue of a woman, who as the camera pans out is shown to be kneeling in the same manner as one would when receiving Communion on the tongue. The governor then stares expressionless into the camera.

“The skit goes further than the viral online trend that inspired it, specifically imitating the posture and gestures of Catholics receiving the Holy Eucharist, in which we believe that Jesus Christ is truly present,” said Paul A. Long, Michigan Catholic Conference President and CEO. “It is not just distasteful or ‘strange;’ it is an all-too-familiar example of an elected official mocking religious persons and their practices. While dialogue on this issue with the governor’s office is appreciated, whether or not insulting Catholics and the Eucharist was the intent, it has had an offensive impact.

“People of this state and across the country have grown tired of and continue to express their alarm at the bar of civility and respect toward people of faith lowering by the day. Michigan is a religiously diverse state and includes thriving communities of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim believers. The time is now for those in public office, their handlers, and strategists to return a level of respect, civility, and appreciation for those who have found peace and fulfillment in life by worshiping God and serving their neighbor.”



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