

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC COLLEGE STUDENTS
Council Resolution - December, 1961

TITLE: THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

FACT: During the past year, the American student in general has developed what might well be termed a social conscience. The denial of civil rights, the threat of nuclear warfare, and the question of civil liberties have given the student a new awareness of his responsibility within the world community. This awareness has caused the student to manifest his protest against the injustices he has found existing within his spheres of influence, and he has done this by the use of non-violent action. This has been exemplified in the sit-in demonstrations in the South, the sympathy pickets in the North, and the Peace Walks throughout the country.

PRINCIPLE: As American Catholic college students, we have the example, the right and the dual obligation to affirm the right of students to protest non-violently against social injustice wherever it is found.

As Americans we have the example set by our forefathers in their repeated use of the boycott and letters of protest. We have the statements of Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, implying the right of men to protest against injustices inflicted on them. We also have the preamble of our Constitution wherein it is stated that one of the purposes of establishing a government is to insure justice. Finally, we, as citizens are guaranteed by the petition and assembly clauses of the First Amendment in our Bill of Rights, the right to assemble and protest our grievances to the government.

As Catholics we have the obligation placed on us by the social doctrine of the Church, so recently expounded in the Encyclical of Pope John XXIII Mater et Magistra, to seek out and strive to correct injustices in the world. It is of the utmost importance that we as Catholics realize that in our modern world, silence gives consent.

As members of the world community we have a further responsibility to assert to all nations the right reserved within a democracy for citizens to non-violently protest against injustice.

Finally, as members of NFCCS, we have a further obligation to carry out the implementation of the Resolution entitled Freedom Riders CR #20 passed by the XVIII National Congress, which requests of its members "to take the responsibility for ending segregation in their own spheres of influence;" the responsibility to which this phrase refers is a responsibility which is of necessity active, and the injustices of segregation are only one example of the types of injustices against which we must protest in our contemporary world.