

# **Archdiocese Creates New Position in Continued Effort to Bolster Church's Presence in the Community**

The Archdiocese of Baltimore announced today that Mary Ellen Russell has been selected to serve as Director of Community Affairs. Archbishop William E. Lori created the new position to assist the Archdiocese in building partnerships within and beyond the Catholic Church in Maryland to strengthen the Church's service to local communities.

Most notably through the work of Catholic Charities, the Catholic Church is the largest nongovernmental provider of social services in the State of Maryland, providing a wide and varied network of support to communities, ranging from healthcare, education, and safety net programs, to counseling and spiritual support. "The Church already provides tremendous assistance to the communities served by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Together with the implementation of our new parish and school planning initiative, I believe we can do even more by investing in a position dedicated solely to working strategically to strengthen our partnerships wherever possible, especially in communities where the needs are greatest," said Archbishop Lori.

Mrs. Russell brings more than 20 years of advocacy experience representing the Catholic Church before the state legislature in Annapolis. As Executive Director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, Russell commanded a strong reputation for building bipartisan relationships with lawmakers and coalitions alike. In her new role as Director of Community Affairs for the Archdiocese, she will oversee outreach to local elected officials, business leaders, clergy, nonprofits and other community partners.

"I am honored to be asked to serve the Archdiocese in this capacity, and thrilled to have the opportunity to support the good work of the Church," said Mrs. Russell.

“There are so many impressive programs operated by the Church and other organizations in the Archdiocese. It’s exciting to contemplate how much more we can accomplish by enhancing our opportunities to work even more collaboratively,” she added.

Mrs. Russell lives in Annapolis, where she and her husband, a permanent deacon assigned at St. Mary’s Parish, have raised four sons.