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Lead U.S. bishop stands by criticism of Republican budget

Joshua J. McElwee | May. 4, 2012 NCR Today

The U.S. bishops? conference?s lead bishop in charge of domestic issues of peace and justice stands by his criticism of Congressman Paul Ryan?s controversial federal budget plan in a lengthy interview with the *National Catholic Register* today.

The interview is with Bishop Stephen Blaire of Stockton, Calif., the chairman of the U.S. bishops? Committee on Domestic Justice, Peace and Human Development. Last April, Blaire issued a letter that called the GOP?s proposed cut in benefits for children of immigrants ?unjust and wrong.?

Blaire?s criticism was among the most vocal of those opposing Ryan?s budget and was echoed by others. Before a speech by Ryan at Georgetown University last week, 90-plus faculty and administrators there referenced Blaire?s letter in opposing Ryan?s plan.

?Our problem with Representative Ryan is that he claims his budget is based on Catholic social teaching,? Jesuit Fr. Thomas J. Reese, one of the Georgetown letter?s organizers, told *NCR* then. ?This is nonsense. As scholars, we want to join the Catholic bishops in pointing out that his budget has a devastating impact on programs for the poor.?

While standing by his criticism in the *Register* interview today [1], Blaire also seems to show some exasperation at the attention it has caused, saying ?I have tried very hard. I have not made any comment about Ryan or about his political philosophy. I have simply tried to speak to the applications of his philosophy; but that is difficult, and it has been given a political spin.?

An interesting read.

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[1] http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/bishop-blaire-discusses-the-ryan-budget-and-catholic-social-doctrine/