Catholics Care.
Catholics Vote.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

We vote because we are citizens. But we vote conscientiously because we are people of faith. Our consciences are formed through studying Scripture and the teachings of the Church, examination of the facts, and prayerful reflection.

This brief insert is intended as a starting point to help us respond to our choices in the current political landscape.

While there are many moral issues before us, every issue is not equal.

- **Issues that directly affect human lives**—such as abortion and euthanasia—are fundamental and demand serious consideration.
- Our Constitution heralds **religious liberty** in the First Amendment, yet increasingly people of faith are having to fight to retain this basic right.
- There is a move in the nation to **redefine marriage**. The marriage of a man and a woman is the foundation of the family and an essential core element of a flourishing society.
- The **growing disparity between rich and poor** means most of the world's resources are in the hands of a small percentage of its people. The federal budget is a moral document and must prioritize the poorest and most vulnerable among us.
- The **millions of undocumented persons** living in the United States deserve our compassion. There is an immigration problem, and we need a humane solution to it.
- War, terror, and **violence** have caused thousands of lost lives. We must work for just solutions to conflict in the Holy Land, throughout the Middle East, and beyond.

Visit FaithfulCitizenship.org today.

As Catholic citizens, we should remember three things:

1. **Respect for the dignity of each person** is the core of Catholic social and moral teaching. This is our most basic principle.
2. **We focus on the common good**, not our own personal interests. We ask, how can we make the world a better place? Not, how can I improve my own personal situation?
3. **We have a responsibility**—a true obligation—to form our consciences and participate in the civic life of this nation.

Here are some ways to do that.

★ Be true to the **teachings of the Church**. Read Scripture, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, teachings from the Holy See, and the statements of our bishops. Read *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* at *faithfulcitizenship.org*. We need to be sure that our reasoning and judgments are well-grounded in our faith.

★ Stay **well-informed about issues** through judicious and reasoned engagement with the immense world of information in the twenty-first century. Just as all issues are not equal, all sources are not equal. For example, an individual's blog—while potentially very insightful—may not have the same fidelity to factual truth as our media sources that hold themselves to professional standards of journalistic ethics, imperfect though they are.

★ Remain in contact **with our representatives** in local, state, and federal government. Our responsibility to form our consciences leads to an obligation to be *active citizens*. We communicate regularly with our leaders—not only during election seasons.

★ Engage in **reasoned, compassionate, and loving dialogue** with others—Catholics and non-Catholics alike—about the issues and choices that we are facing as a nation. Remember that we are called first to witness the Gospel, and through that witness, to share our social teaching, to highlight the moral dimensions of issues, and to participate in debate on public policy.

★ The dual calling of faith and citizenship lies at the heart of **what it means to be a Catholic in the United States**. We stand on the shoulders of many Catholics who have gone before us, who have helped the United States of America become a better country because of their faith in a loving God.

We care.
Therefore, we vote.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship
faithfulcitizenship.org

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