



Examining The Issues of the Day ...IN CHURCH?!

Catholic Social Teaching

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. "People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 220). **The obligation to participate in political life is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.**



The Church's Role in Matters of State

The Church is non-partisan and would never presume to tell you for whom to vote. However, the Church plays an important role here, which is not only to encourage the faithful to carry out their responsibilities in political life, but to help them to do so. Bishops, aided by priests, deacons, and lay ministry, must share pertinent Catholic Social Teaching and guidance on the moral dimensions of the issues of the day, particularly involving public decisions with real and lasting consequences. **Church Teaching and Mission, such as the defense of human life, the dignity of every human being, and the protection of the weak and vulnerable, must be shared, and advanced.**

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

The U.S. bishops offer a teaching document to guide Catholics in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*.

"Some question whether it is appropriate for the Church to play a role in political life. However, the obligation to teach the moral truths that should shape our lives, including our public lives, is central to the mission given to the Church by Jesus Christ.

Indeed, our Church's teaching is in accord with the foundational values that have shaped our nation's history: 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'"

- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which can be found on the USCCB website, usccb.org

From Bishop Frank J. Dewane

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a basic part of the mission we have received from Jesus Christ, who offers a vision of life revealed to us in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. As such, standing for, or against, issues that support or undermine Catholic values is a responsibility of all people of faith. This kind of political participation reflects the social teaching of our Church and the best traditions of our nation.

In this election year, it is my hope that you will receive your Parish's guidance regarding the issues of the day with an open heart, and an open mind. When confronted with issues that represent a threat to our shared Catholic values, the Church must not be silent and simply cannot remain on the sidelines.

+ Frank J. Dewane, Bishop of the Diocese of Venice



Catechism of the Catholic Church



It is necessary that all participate, each according to his/her position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life (CCC 1913-1915).



The social duty of Christians is to respect and awaken in each man/woman the love of the true and the good . . . Christians are called to be the light of the world. Thus, the Church shows forth the kingship of Christ over all creation and in particular over human societies (CCC 2105).



*May God bless you as you consider and pray over your voting decisions in this Election Year.
May God bless our nation with true wisdom, peace, and mutual forgiveness, that we may decide together, through our democratic processes, to uphold the dignity of life and the common good. Amen.*

“You are the light of the world.”

(Matthew 5:14)