



**Faithful Citizenship:
A Catholic Call to
Political Responsibility**

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

- † Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- † Call to Family, Community and Participation
- † Rights and Responsibilities
- † Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- † Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- † Solidarity
- † Caring for God's Creation

“Faithful Citizenship” Is NOT

☞ An Instruction by the Bishops on “How to Vote”

☞ A Call to Form a Religious “Voting Bloc” or Interest Group

☞ An Endorsement of Any Specific Ideology (Right or Left)

☞ An Effort to Challenge the “Separation of Church and State”

☞ A Withdrawal of Catholics’ Right to Vote as They Feel is Best

“Faithful Citizenship” Is A Call To:

- 👉 Lift up the Moral/Human Dimensions of Issues
- 👉 Be a “Community of Conscience” in Society
- 👉 Examine Candidates’ Positions on a Full Range of Issues
- 👉 Be “Political, not Partisan” and “Principled, not Ideological”
- 👉 Be Active in Voter Registration and Education, Legislative Networks, etc.



Why a Catholic Call to “Faithful Citizenship?”

- ✍ U.S. Constitution protects right of individuals and religious bodies to speak out without government interference or favoritism.
- ✍ In Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation.
- ✍ The dual calling of faith and citizenship is “at the heart” of what it means to be a Catholic.

Central Question for 2006 Elections:

Should not be . . .

✓ “Are you better off than 2 years ago?”

But . . .

✓ “How can all of us (especially the weak and vulnerable) be better off in years ahead?”

✓ “How can we protect and promote human life and dignity?”

✓ “How can we pursue greater peace and justice?”

“Promoting Human Life” Issues

- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Cloning
- Embryonic Stem cell Research
- Assisted Suicide
- Targeting Civilians in War
- Genocide
- Death Penalty
- Nuclear and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Land Mines
- Global Trade in Arms

“Promoting Family Life” Issues

- Marriage
- Just Wages
- Protection of Children
- Educational Choice
- Regulation of the Media/Internet

“Pursuing Social Justice” Issues

- Economic Justice (living wage, etc.)
- Workers Rights
- Reducing Poverty as Measure of “Welfare Reform”
- Child Tax Credits
- Affordable/Accessible Health Care
- Affordable Housing

“Pursuing Social Justice” Issues

- Ending Hunger – Food Security
- Fair Prices to Farmers
- Fair Wages to Farm Workers
- Care for Immigrants
- Reasonable Gun Control
- Reasonable Affirmative Action
- Care for the Environment

Global Issues Presented in “Faithful Citizenship”

- Debt Relief
- Global Poverty (Aid and Trade Policies)
- Religious Liberty and Other Basic Rights
- Support of U.N.
- Safe Haven for Refugees
- Immigration Policy
- Addressing Regional Conflicts
- Land Mines, Sanctions/Embargoes
- “School of the Americas”
- Environmental Responsibility



Cardinal McCarrick's discussion of Cardinal Ratzinger's (now Pope Benedict XVI) advice

- Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) makes a clear distinction between public officials and voters,
- When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for the candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted if there are proportionate reasons.



A Call to Action

- Vote – November 7, 2006
- Legislative Advocacy Network

www.paxjoliet.org

Catholic Social Principle: Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy exists to serve people.

- The current minimum wage of \$5.15 hour increasingly forces working families to hold multiple jobs to make ends meet. The minimum wage has not increased since 1997 and its real value today is 30% below its peak in 1968.
- Millions of Americans are concerned about their jobs as well as deteriorating pensions, health benefits, and ability to make ends meet.

Catholic Social Principle: Promotion of Peace and Disarmament

Peace is a positive, action-oriented concept. It involves mutual respect and collaboration between peoples and nations.

Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings and human institutions.

Global peace requires international cooperation, the elimination of weapons of proliferation, the promotion of human rights and the addressing of root causes of terrorism.

Catholic Social Principle: Preferential Option for the Poor

The federal budget is a moral statement that demonstrates our nation's priorities. Those with the greatest need—the poor, the immigrant, women, and those in need—require the greatest consideration. The need is increasing with over 35 million Americans living in poverty. A decline in federal funding, along with skyrocketing spending on the military budget, threatens the safety net of services that Americans depend on including welfare, food stamps, Medicaid and Social Security.

Catholic Social Principle: Dignity of the Human Person

All people are sacred. Promote respect for all human life. Dignity issues encompass a culture of life: from womb to tomb, and also quality-of-life issues.

Women are still paid 75% as much as their male counterparts in the workplace. Many seniors cannot afford the medications they need. We must ask questions related to these vulnerable members of society: Are the poor better off than they were 2 years ago? Are civil rights protected for all? How do we defend the vulnerable and the weak?

Catholic Social Principle: Rights and Responsibilities

People have fundamental rights. Promote the common good. The U.S. stands alone in the industrialized nations as the only country failing to provide full access to health care for all citizens—44 million are currently uninsured. In housing, one quarter of the U.S. population—65 million people—experience housing problems that include high-cost burdens, substandard conditions, overcrowding and homelessness. The U.S. Patriot Act, passed after 9/11 represents another challenge to the basic rights of people by weakening protections levied by the Bill of Rights and Constitution.

Catholic Social Principle: Stewardship of God's Creation

The goods of Earth are gifts of God for all.

The mainstream scientific community agrees that greenhouse-gases (GHG) like carbon dioxide are changing our climate—the mean global temperature has increased significantly in the past century. Immediate threats to humankind relate to increased storms, floods and droughts, heat waves in urban areas, and an increase in the spread of disease. The U.S. is the biggest single contributor to global climate change, producing 25% of all greenhouse gasses.

Catholic Social Principle: Global Solidarity and Development

We are a human family. Authentic development avoids the extremes of underdevelopment on one hand and superdevelopment on the other. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and other similar trade agreements lead to job movement overseas. Companies, to cut costs, have moved to countries where wages are lowest and environmental protections are weakest. Millions of people lack basics such as clean water while their governments are forced to pay more in debt repayments. We also need to share medical resources.

Pope John Paul II, 1989

- “Our human interdependence...is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all responsible for all.”

Three Principles for Voting

- Inform your Conscience—on Church teaching and the candidates positions. Consider the integrity of the candidate's advertising.
- Apply Prudence—when deciding how to apply Catholic values to voting. Know the results of the candidate's decisions.
- Vote for the Common Good—by focusing on what's best for everyone, especially the poor and the vulnerable. Checkout creative and thoughtful solutions to problems.