

Voting with a Well-Formed Conscience

A Catholic Social Teaching Reflection for Parishioners

As Catholics, we are called to participate in public life with faith, reason, prayer, and a well-formed conscience. The Church does not tell us which candidate to support. Instead, she gives us moral principles to help us discern which candidate, platform, and public record more closely reflect the Gospel and the dignity of every human person.



Begin with Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching provides a moral framework for public life. Important themes include the life and dignity of the human person, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, rights and responsibilities, the dignity of work and workers, care for creation, and the call to family, community, and participation.

Questions for Prayerful Discernment

- Which candidate most consistently protects the life and dignity of every person—from conception to natural death, and in every circumstance of vulnerability?
- Which candidate's positions best promote the common good rather than only individual or partisan interests?
- Which candidate shows concern for those who are poor, hungry, unhoused, elderly, disabled, imprisoned, unborn, migrants, refugees, or otherwise vulnerable?
- Which candidate respects religious freedom, family life, human rights, and the responsibilities we owe to one another?
- Which candidate supports just economic policies, the dignity of work, fair treatment of workers, and care for those who struggle to provide for their families?
- Which candidate is more likely to promote peace, reject violence, and work for reconciliation at home and abroad?
- Which candidate shows responsible care for God's creation and concern for future generations?
- Which candidate demonstrates honesty, humility, respect for others, and a willingness to serve rather than dominate?

Making a Moral Judgment

No candidate or party will perfectly reflect the fullness of Catholic teaching. Voters should avoid reducing Catholic moral teaching to a single party label or campaign slogan. At the same time, some issues involve grave threats to human life and dignity and must be weighed seriously. Catholics are called to examine each candidate's policies, character, record, and likely impact on the most vulnerable, then make the best prudential judgment possible before God.

A Simple Discernment Practice

1. Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance.
2. Seek Truth: Read Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching, and Church teaching.
3. Listen especially to people whose lives are affected by the issues – the poor, migrants, the unborn, their mothers, workers, the elderly and others whose voices are overlooked.
4. Discern: Consider the moral importance of the issues, the candidates' positions and records, their character and integrity.
5. Vote with a conscience formed by faith, reason, truth, and charity.

Prayer: God of justice and mercy, guide us as we prepare to vote. Form our consciences in truth and compassion. Help us protect the dignity of every person, especially those who are poor, vulnerable, excluded, or unheard. Lead us to choose leaders who seek the common good, uphold peace, care for creation, and serve with honesty and humility. May our participation in public life help build a society of justice, solidarity, and hope. Amen.

Our Advocacy Doesn't End on Election Day



Voting is one act of faithful citizenship—not the last. After Election Day, we continue to pray, stay informed, contact public officials, serve people who are vulnerable, and advocate together for human dignity and the common good. Through respectful dialogue and persistent action, we help build a more just and compassionate society.