



Office of the Bishop  
Diocese of Toledo

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October 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is not uncommon in an election cycle to be asked by members of the faithful how being Catholic should inform the way we vote. While it is not my role to tell someone which candidates to vote for, it is important to note that voting is not only a civic duty, but a moral obligation. Pope St. John Paul II reminds us that, "the value of democracy stands or falls with the values which it embodies and promotes. Of course, values such as the dignity of every human person, respect for inviolable and inalienable human rights, and the adoption of the 'common good' as the end and criterion regulating political life are certainly fundamental and not to be ignored" ([\*Evangeliium Vitae\*, 70](#)). We must fulfill this high calling in the way we live and the way we vote.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church provides a clear moral compass, emphasizing the sanctity of human life, the dignity of the person, and the common good. Paragraph 2239 states, "It is the duty of citizens to contribute along with the civil authorities to the good of society in a spirit of truth, justice, solidarity, and freedom." This calls us actively to engage in the political process, ensuring our votes align with these enduring values. A vote for a candidate is a vote for their party platform. We need prayerfully to discern which candidate and platform are more closely aligned with what we believe and profess as Catholics.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) document "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)," highlights the importance of protecting human life, stating, "**The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle** of human rights that leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace." The issue of abortion, the direct and intentional killing of an innocent baby in the womb, should weigh heavily on our consciences as we consider candidates in local and national politics and policies.

The USCCB document [Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics](#), (22), presents a striking and timeless analogy: "If we understand the human person as the 'temple of the Holy Spirit' -- the living house of God -- then these latter issues [racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing, and healthcare] fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. *All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house's foundation.* These directly and immediately violate the human person's most fundamental right -- the right to life. Neglect of these issues is the equivalent of building our house on sand. Such attacks cannot help but lull the social conscience in ways ultimately destructive of other human rights."

Voting as a Catholic means engaging with the political process in a way that reflects the love of Christ and the teachings of His Church. It is an opportunity to be the voice for the voiceless, to advocate for justice and peace, and to contribute to a society that upholds the dignity of every human person. Together, we approach this sacred duty with prayerful discernment, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we cast our votes for a more just society.

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas  
Bishop of Toledo