

The Catholic Church, Politics and Political Issues

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) provides a resource for the Catholic faithful *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* (tambien en Español), this teaching document on the political responsibility of Catholics also provides guidance in the exercise of their rights and duties as participants in our democracy.

In particular, we draw your attention to the *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship - Introductory Letter* which reads in part:

Pope Francis has continued to draw attention to important issues such as migration, xenophobia, racism, abortion, global conflict, and care for creation. In the United States and around the world, many challenges demand our attention.

The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty, and the death penalty.

The USCCB has also recently released a series of videos to inspire prayer and action in political life and to help Catholics apply the Church's teaching as handed down by Pope Francis. The videos complement *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, and seek to help the faithful participate in public life, prioritize faith over partisan politics, engage with civility, and respond to pressing issues of our day. Each video ends with a prayer. The videos are titled:

Catholics Participate in Public Life

Catholics Protect Human Life and Dignity

Catholics Promote the Common Good

Catholics Love their Neighbors

Faithful Citizens Work with Christ as He Builds His Kingdom (a compilation of the four videos)

Importantly, as we enter this Presidential election year, below are some reminders regarding political activity and the exercising of our civic rights and duties.

As you are already aware, parishes and other non-profit, IRS-designated section 501(c)(3) church organizations are prohibited from participating in political campaign activity. Thus, certain political activities that are entirely appropriate for individuals may not be undertaken by church organizations or their representatives.

For quick reference, you are encouraged to review the complete list of Do's and Don'ts Guidelines During Election Season and/or a list of more detailed guidance regarding political activity provided by the USCCB Office of General Counsel. An abbreviated list of "Do's and Don't's" follows.

DO:

- Address the moral and human dimensions of public issues.
- Share church teaching on human life, human rights, and justice and peace.
- Apply Catholic values to legislation and public issues.
- Conduct a non-partisan voter registration drive on church property.
- Distribute unbiased candidate questionnaires covering issues of human life, justice, and peace that have been reviewed and approved by your diocesan attorney.
- Check with your diocesan attorney if you have any questions about what is appropriate.

DON'T:

- Endorse or oppose candidates for political office.
- Distribute partisan campaign literature under church auspices.
- Arrange for groups to work for a candidate for public office.
- Invite only selected candidates to address your church-sponsored group.
- Conduct voter registration slanted toward one party.
- Distribute a biased candidate survey.

**Thanks for mailing in your contributions!!
COLLECTION FOR LAST WEEK
\$19,222.00**