

Pastor's Column

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What Ways of Thinking Do We Bring to Our Political Discussions?

As we end this month of October, we are mindful that we have been celebrating and promoting this month as “Respect Life!” As Catholics, we are a people who believe in life and the promotion and protection of life from womb to tomb.

We have two major political parties in our country—the Republicans and the Democrats—and both parties are courting the Catholic vote. Sadly, but in truth, we must admit that neither party is pro-life as the Catholic Church is pro-life. We see pro-life stances in both political parties, but we also see anti pro-life choices in both parties. Neither of the major political parties reflects the pro-life stance of the Catholic Church.

Yet, as Catholics, we must exercise our responsibilities and duties as citizens of this country. We must take the values of the Catholic Church, and through our informed consciences, vote for the candidates and positions that best reflect a consistent pro-life ethic. This becomes an issue of conscience and not political party affiliation.

I share with you these “10 Questions for the Campaign” that came to us from the Administrative Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their statement, “The Challenge of Faithful Citizenship—A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility.” Although these questions were created over ten years ago, they are still very relevant as we think through our political positions, choose political candidates, and make our choices based on informed Catholic Teaching and the use of our conscience.

1. *After September 11, how can we build not only a safer world, but a better world—more just, more secure, more peaceful, more respectful of human life and dignity?*
2. *How will we protect the weakest in our midst—innocent unborn children? How can our nation not turn to violence to solve some of its most difficult problems—abortion to deal with difficult pregnancies; the death penalty to combat crime; euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of age, illness, and disability; and war to address international disputes?*
3. *How will we address the tragic fact that more than 30,000 children die every day as a result of hunger, international debt, and lack of development around the world?*

4. *How can our nation help parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, a sense of hope, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility? How can our society defend the central institution of marriage and better support families in their moral responsibilities?*
5. *How will we address the growing number of people without affordable and accessible health care? How can health care better protect human life and respect human dignity?*
6. *How will our society combat continuing prejudice, overcome hostility toward immigrants and refugees, and heal the wounds of racism, religious bigotry, and discrimination?*
7. *How will our nation pursue the values of justice and peace in a world where injustice is common, desperate poverty widespread, and peace too often overwhelmed by violence?*
8. *What are the responsibilities and limitations of families, community organizations, markets, and government? How can these elements of society work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation?*
9. *When should our nation use, or avoid the use of military force—for what purpose, under what authority, and at what human cost?*
10. *How can we join with other nations to lead the world to greater respect for human life and dignity, religious freedom and democracy, economic justice, and care for God's creation?*

None of these questions are easy to answer! Pray. Spend time and energy in creating an informed conscience that will influence your political thinking...

Fr. Mike



Help Save Lives from September 25 - November 3

Includes prayer and fasting, peaceful vigil, and community outreach
www.40daysforlife.com/sanmarcos