



Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 9, 2016



Pastor's Column

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Faithful Citizenship—Election Day, Tuesday, November 8

In a few weeks, the Presidential Election will take place. Also, there will be many people and propositions on whom and for which we will need to decide. This will create a full ballot for everyone voting!

Hopefully, all of us are beginning to prepare to vote by gathering information regarding the various candidates and the various propositions that are on the ballot.

Responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation...

By our baptism, Catholics are committed to following Jesus Christ and to be "salt for the earth, light for the nations."

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us, "It is necessary that all participate according to his position and role, in promoting the common good."

This is inherent in the dignity of the human person...As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life" (nos. 1913-1915).

—Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

In exercising "Faithful Citizenship," we are mindful that in the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; participation in the political process is a moral obligation.

As the Catholic Church, we never endorse any specific candidates nor do we endorse any specific political parties. And we are mindful that neither major party, Republican nor Democratic, is fully "Pro-life" in the Catholic Church's understanding of "Pro-life."

As we vote then for specific candidates, we need to be examining them through the Catholic lens of "Pro-life," and then, according to our conscience, vote for the candidates and party that exhibits best the "Pro-life" characteristics of the Catholic Church.

Always be mindful that no one can tell you how to vote! The Magisterium of the Church will inform you what the Catholic position is and encourage you to vote accordingly, but when you are in the voter's booth, you, in the presence of God, with an informed conscience, must vote according to the direction of your conscience.

Conscience is supreme, and it holds a most sacred place within Catholic Tradition.

Although the Catholic Church does not endorse specific political parties nor specific candidates, She does, at times, endorse specific propositions that may be on the ballot.

This year the California Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops has made their position known on three Propositions that will appear on the California November ballot. They are endorsing a "Yes" on Propositions 57 and 62 and asking for a "No" on Proposition 66.

Enclosed in today's bulletin is an insert that will give you a Catholic perspective to help you in your preparation for voting.

Please take time to read and reflect on its content. Also the insert contains the names of websites to which you can go for further information and reflection.

Take time in the coming weeks to become an informed voter.

The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society...is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly, respecting its legitimate autonomy and cooperating with other citizens according to their respective competencies and fulfilling their own responsibility.

—Deus Caritas Est, #28, Pope Benedict XVI, 2006

F. Mike



November 2016 - As a Catholic voter...

How do I Decide?

Our nation faces many political challenges that demand well-informed moral choices: the ongoing destruction of a million innocent human lives each year by abortion; physician-assisted suicide; the redefinition of marriage; the excessive consumption of material goods and destruction of natural resources, harming the environment as well as the poor; deadly attacks on Christians and other religious minorities throughout the world; efforts to narrow the definition and exercise of religious freedom; economic policies that fail to prioritize the needs of poor people, at home and abroad; a broken immigration system and a worldwide refugee crisis; and wars, terror, and violence that threaten every aspect of human life and dignity.

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Visit the California Catholic Conference Website to learn more:

<http://www.cacatholic.org/faq-page>



The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship



Part I of II: Our Call as Catholic Citizens

This brief document is Part I of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.



“If indeed ‘the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,’ the Church ‘cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.’”¹ So writes Pope Francis, quoting Pope Benedict XVI.

Our nation faces many political challenges that demand well-informed moral choices:

- The ongoing destruction of a million innocent human lives each year by abortion
- Physician-assisted suicide
- The redefinition of marriage
- The excessive consumption of material goods and the destruction of natural resources, harming the environment as well as the poor
- Deadly attacks on Christians and other religious minorities throughout the world
- Efforts to narrow the definition and exercise of religious freedom
- Economic policies that fail to prioritize the needs of poor people, at home and abroad
- A broken immigration system and a worldwide refugee crisis
- Wars, terror, and violence that threaten every aspect of human life and dignity.²

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Why Does the Church Teach About Issues Affecting Public Policy?

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to “love one another” (Jn 13:34).

The US Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to proclaim and live out their faith without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning its moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

Who in the Church Should Participate in Political Life?

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to any political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to

human life and dignity. This should not discourage us. On the contrary, it makes our obligation to act all the more urgent. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good. Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.

How Can Catholic Social Teaching Help Guide Our Participation?

In the words of Pope Francis, “progress in building a people in peace, justice and fraternity depends on four principles related to constant tensions present in every social reality. These derive from the pillars of the Church's social doctrine, which serve as ‘primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena.’”³ The four principles include the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Taken together, these principles provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called a “consistent ethic of life” (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 22).

Rightly understood, this ethic does not treat all issues as morally equivalent; nor does it reduce Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens “to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest” (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following summary of the four principles highlights several themes of Catholic social teaching for special consideration: these include **human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for God's creation, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.**⁴

The Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is a rich and multifaceted Catholic teaching on human dignity summarized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Every human being “*must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness . . .* This entails above all the requirement not only of simple respect on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person” (no. 131). The *Compendium* continues, “It is necessary to ‘consider every neighbor without exception

as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity' (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27). Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society."⁵

Subsidiarity

It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, and local realities—in short, for those economic, social, cultural, recreational, professional, and political communities to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.⁶ The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions; yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.⁷

The Common Good

The common good is comprised of “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.”⁸

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met**. Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, and to the larger society.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. An economic system must serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by **respecting the dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and coworkers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

We have a duty to **care for God's creation**, which Pope Francis refers to in *Laudato Si'* as “our common home.”⁹ We all are called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future. Pope Francis, consistent with St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message, 1990 and 2010), has lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. Pope Francis speaks of an “ecological debt” (no. 51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations. And he calls all of us to an “ecological conversion” (no. 219), by which “the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us]”.¹⁰ Indeed, this concern with “natural ecology” is an indispensable part of

the broader “human ecology,” which encompasses not only material but moral and social dimensions as well.

Solidarity

Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible for *all*.” It is found in “a commitment to the good of one's neighbor with the readiness, in the Gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to ‘serve him’ instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage.”¹¹

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

In a special way, our solidarity must find expression in the **preferential option for the poor and vulnerable**. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor, and the marginalized.

Conclusion

In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation.

Notes

- 1 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 183.
- 2 This specific list of issues is taken from the Introductory Note to *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2015. For a fuller consideration, see the second document in this series, “The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship; Part II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles” (2016), and the full statement of the bishops' *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2015.
- 3 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221.
- 4 These principles are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), no. 160. For more information on these principles, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2016, nos. 40ff.
- 5 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 132. This summary represents only a few highlights from the fuller treatment of the human person in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. For the fuller treatment, see especially nos. 124-159 where many other important aspects of human dignity are treated.
- 6 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.
- 7 *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 4-6.
- 8 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164
- 9 *Laudato Si'*, no. 77.
- 10 *Laudato Si'*, nos. 219 and 217.
- 11 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27)

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The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship



Part II of II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles

This brief document is Part II of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Part I of the summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, considered the core principles that underlie Catholic engagement in the political realm. Part II is a consideration of the process by which these principles are applied to the act of voting and taking positions on policy issues. It begins with the general consideration of the nature of conscience and the role of prudence. The application of prudential judgment does not mean that all choices are equally valid or that the bishops' guidance and that of other church leaders is just another political opinion or policy preference among many others. Rather, Catholics are urged to listen carefully to the Church's teachers when they apply Catholic social teaching to specific proposals and situations.

How Does the Church Help the Catholic Faithful to Speak About Political and Social Questions?

A Well-Formed Conscience

The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

The Virtue of Prudence

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us "to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage, which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. At times, Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build, through moral means, a more just and peaceful world.



Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion. Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life including genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As St. John Paul II said, "The fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment."¹ The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights such as a right to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work.

Avoiding Two Temptations

Two temptations in public life can distort the Church's defense of human life and dignity: The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed. The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, environmental degradation, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care or housing, pornography, human trafficking, redefining civil marriage, compromising religious liberty,

or unjust immigration policies are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

Making Moral Choices

The bishops do not tell Catholics how to vote; the responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience, aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection.

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.¹

What Public Policies Should Concern Catholics Most?

As Catholics, we are led to raise questions about political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. We focus more broadly on what protects or threatens the dignity of every human life. Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. In light of ethical principles, we bishops offer the following policy goals that we hope will guide Catholics as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices:

- Address the preeminent requirement to protect **human life**—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies with the supports they need. End the following practices: the use of euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability; the destruction of human embryos in the name of research; the use of the death penalty to combat crime; and the imprudent resort to war to address international disputes.
- Protect the fundamental understanding of **marriage** as the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman

as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false “gender” ideologies; provide better support for family life morally, socially, and economically, so that our nation helps parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility.

- Achieve comprehensive **immigration** reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.
- Help families and children overcome **poverty** and ensure access to and choice in **education**, as well as decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation, while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the policy areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.
- Ensure full conscience protection and **religious freedom** for individuals and groups to meet social needs, and so enable families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.
- Provide **health care** while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.
- Continue to oppose policies that reflect racism, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of **unjust discrimination**.
- Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of **military force**—examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost—with a special view to seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.
- Join with others **around the world** to pursue peace, protect human rights and religious liberty, and advance economic justice and care for creation.

Notes

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52.

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Election Results

Want to see election results as they come in? Get up-to-the-minute vote counts during statewide elections at vote.sos.ca.gov or on Twitter by following @CASOSvote.

Voter Information in 10 languages

Visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-california or call one of the toll-free voter hotline numbers below.

Voter Hotlines

English (800) 345-VOTE (8683)

Español / Spanish (800) 232-VOTA (8682)

中文 / Chinese (800) 339-2857

हिंदी / Hindi (888) 345-2692

日本語 / Japanese (800) 339-2865

ខ្មែរ / Khmer (888) 345-4917

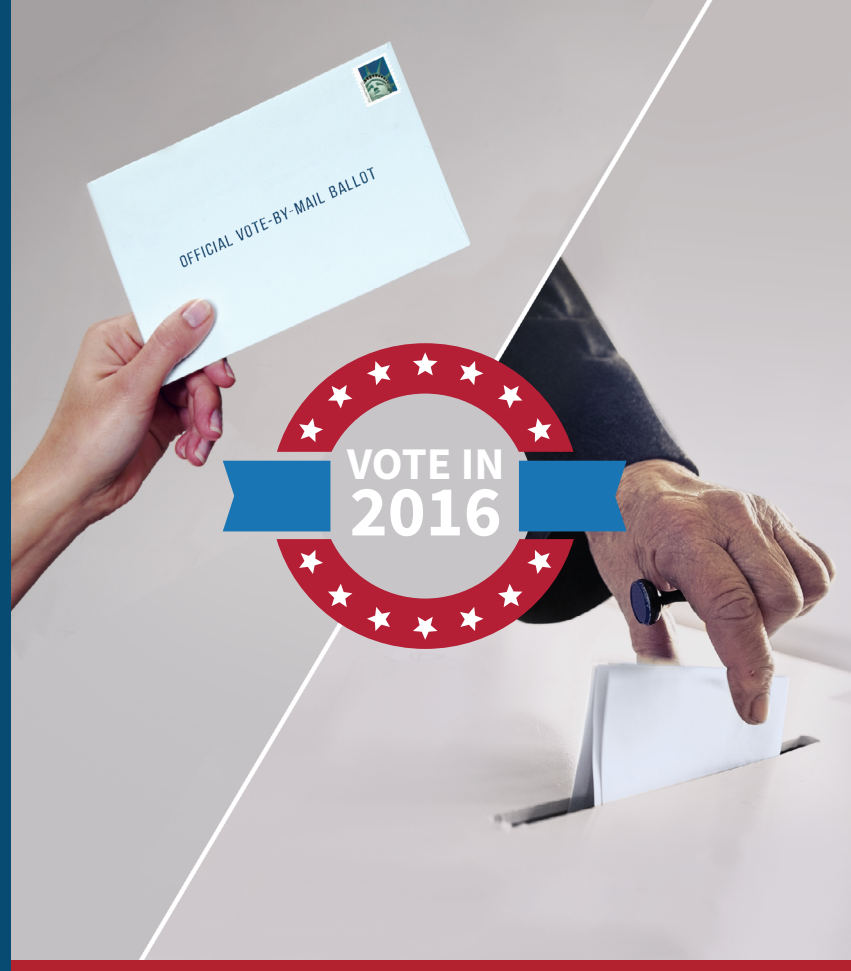
한국어 / Korean (866) 575-1558

Tagalog (800) 339-2957

ไทย / Thai (855) 345-3933

Việt ngữ / Vietnamese (800) 339-8163

TTY / TDD (800) 833-8683



**Are you
registered?**

**November 8
General Election**

Polls are
open from
**7:00 a.m. to
8:00 p.m.**
on Election Day



California Secretary of State Alex Padilla
(800) 345-VOTE (8683)



Register to Vote

To register to vote in California, you must be:

A United States citizen;

A resident of California;

18 years of age or older on Election Day;

Not currently imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony; and

Not found by a court to be mentally incompetent.

You can apply online at RegisterToVote.ca.gov or find an application at post offices, libraries and some government offices. In most cases you must register at least 15 days before Election Day to be eligible to vote in that election.

You must re-register to vote if you move, or change your name or political party preference.

Ballot Information

Registered voters receive the Secretary of State's Official Voter Information Guide in the mail a few weeks before Election Day. County elections offices mail a sample ballot booklet to voters. These nonpartisan guides include information about ballot measures, candidates, voting rights, and more.

Vote by Mail

Any registered voter can vote by mail in California. Fill out the vote-by-mail ballot application in your sample ballot booklet, find one at sos.ca.gov, or contact your county elections office. Your completed application must arrive at your county elections office at least seven days before Election Day.

To ensure your voted ballot is delivered by the deadline, your voted ballot must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by your county elections office no later than three days after Election Day.

Provisional Voting

Even if your name is not on the voter list at the polling place, you have the right to vote with a provisional ballot in the county where you are registered to vote. Your provisional ballot will be counted only after the elections official has confirmed you are a registered voter and you did not vote anywhere else in that election. The poll worker can give you information about how to check if your provisional ballot was counted and, if it was not counted, the reason why.

Find Your Polling Place

Your polling place location may change between elections. Check the back of your county sample ballot booklet for the location of your polling place. You can also find your polling place by calling your county elections office or the Secretary of State's Voter Hotline at (800) 345-8683, or visit sos.ca.gov.

**Remember
to
Vote!**

NOVEMBER 8 | GENERAL ELECTION

Register to vote by OCT 24

Request a vote-by-mail ballot by NOV 1

Return vote-by-mail ballot (Must be postmarked by) NOV 8



RegisterToVote.ca.gov



*The California Conference of Catholic Bishops
has expressed positions on three California Propositions*

Prop 62-YES Prop 66-NO Prop 57-YES

**Propositions 62 and 66
The Death Penalty**

Death Penalty and Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Francis reminds us that the commandment “thou shall not kill” pertains to the innocent as well as the guilty, in order to respect the sacredness and human dignity of all people. As a society, we should strive towards restorative justice that contributes to the healing of the guilty, victims’ families and society to strengthen the common good and stop perpetuating the culture of death. The California Catholic Conference of Bishops are supporting Prop 62 to end the use of the death penalty and opposing Prop 66 which would speed up executions. For information and more on Catholic teaching, visit www.cacatholic.org.

**Bishops Have Long Called for Ending
the Use of the Death Penalty**

“We should resist policies that simply call for more prisons, harsher sentences, and increased reliance on the death penalty,” said the U.S. Bishops in 2000. “Rather, we should promote policies that put more resources into restoration, education, and substance-abuse treatment programs.” During this Year of Mercy, Californians have a chance to end the death in our state by approving Prop 62 and rejecting Prop 66. For more information, visit www.cacatholic.org.

Mercy and the Death Penalty

As the issue of the death penalty comes up this election, it is important to remain prayerful and conscious of God’s mercy in our own lives and how that translates to others. In his message to a world conference against the death penalty earlier this year, Pope Francis lamented that capital punishment “contradicts God’s plan for individuals and society, and his merciful justice.” As Catholics, we should look to extend to others the loving hands of mercy and redemption that God has so lovingly extended to us. Explore the church’s teaching on the death penalty and why the California Bishops are urging support for Prop 62 at www.cacatholic.org.

Pro-Life Positions and the Death Penalty

According to Pope John Paul II, “New evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation. A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil.” (Mass, St. Louis, MO., 1-27-99.) The same protection for the sanctity of human life talked about so often with abortion extends to the death penalty. All souls, innocent or flawed, have intrinsic value, as we are all created in God’s likeness and are precious in the eyes of our Lord. The death penalty – which will be repealed by Prop 62 – destroys the opportunity for redemption and the ability of God’s mercy to work in the lives of those affected. For more on forgiveness and the sanctity of all life, visit www.cacatholic.org.

**Proposition 57
The Public Safety and Rehabilitation Act**

**Prop 57 would make three significant changes in the
California penal system:**

1. Under existing law prosecutors decide whether young offenders (as young as 14) will be tried in juvenile court or in adult court. As prosecutors, they often set juvenile offenders for trial in the adult court system. Proposition 57 would shift that responsibility to judges, giving them the authority, and discretion, to determine whether youthful offenders will be tried in adult court or juvenile court. But it would not mandate that they be tried in juvenile court; that decision would be made by the judge, based on the crime and the offender.
2. Proposition 57 also would allow, but not require, the release from prison of people who have completed their sentence for the primary crime for which they were convicted. Currently many remain in prison after completing the sentence for their primary and presumably most serious crime, serving out time for lesser charges on which they were also convicted.
3. Proposition 57 encourages completion of rehabilitation and education programs by people with nonviolent convictions. How? By offering them the possibility of earning time off their sentence for good behavior. This provision seeks to help convicts learn to become better citizens, by offering them the incentive of returning to society if they demonstrate personal responsibility while in tough environment of prison life.

**The Catholic Bishops of California support Proposition 57.
Specifically they emphasize that:**

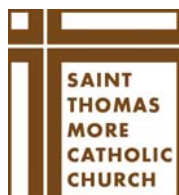
1. Punishment for its own sake is never an adequate response to crime
2. The Proposition brings common sense to juvenile court proceedings
3. Victims must have a central place in our justice system

What does “Restorative Justice” mean?

“Restorative Justice” has two goals:

1. to help victims and their families heal from the traumatic effects of violent crime, and
2. to break the cycle of crime and increase public safety by helping offenders rehabilitate and reintegrate with their families and communities.

For more information, visit www.cacatholic.org.



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