

20 Questions for Catholic Voters toward Faithful Citizenship

Last November, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops overwhelmingly approved the document, “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States.”

The lengthy title speaks for itself and its 90 paragraphs sought out some elementary and clarifying principles that should be helpful as we go to the polls on November 4.

The full text of the document can be found at www.faithfulcitizenship.org. The following questions, with paragraph citations, will hopefully help in carrying out our obligation to vote and to do so responsibly.

Some of the following are direct quotes from the document.

1. Should Catholics expect to hear, receive and act upon Church teaching in forming their consciences in matters affecting national public policy? (5)
2. Is it appropriate for religious groups and people of faith to bring their convictions and concerns to public life? (11)
3. Are Catholics morally obliged to participate in the political life of our nation? (13)
4. Should Catholics attempt to transform their political institutions to represent their moral convictions? (14)
5. Do you, as a Catholic, feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and too few candidates fully share our Church’s comprehensive commitment to the dignity of life of every human being from conception to natural death? (16)
6. To what degree are individuals bound to follow their consciences? (17)
7. Do you see it as your serious and life-long obligation to form your conscience in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church? (17)

8. Are you convinced that as conscientious Catholics in serious matters of morality you can know the truth with certainty? (22)
9. Why are abortion, euthanasia and racism “intrinsically evil” and therefore always and everywhere morally wrong? (22)
10. How strong is your determination to outlaw intrinsically evil acts? (23)
11. Is our pursuit of the rights to health, to home, to work and to family false and illusory if we do not defend the right to life with maximum determination? (26)
12. Is the Church perceived as defending the right to life so strongly as to neglect other basic rights, such as those related to torture, health care, immigration and poverty? (29)
13. Is it true that it could be rarely morally permissible to favor a law that permits abortion, euthanasia or racism? (32)
14. Is it true that there are some truly grave, moral reasons that might justify voting for a candidate who takes a position in favor of abortion, euthanasia or racism? (35)
15. What options are open to the voter when all candidates favor these intrinsic evils? (36)
16. How persuasive and relevant is Pope Benedict’s call for “eucharistic consistency” – that there is an objective connection between receiving the Eucharist and promoting basic human values? (38)
17. How has the “consistent ethic of life” principle sometimes been distorted? (40)
18. While Catholics should not be “single issue voters,” might not candidates’ promotion of an intrinsic moral evil disqualify them from receiving support? (42)
19. Will not the redefinition of marriage – by permitting same-sex unions – undermine marriage between a man and a woman as the first and fundamental unit of society? (46, 70)
20. Does not the state’s refusal to assist financially taxpayers who send their

children to parochial school violate the fundamental parental right to choose the education best suited for their children's needs? (72)

Next week: an appeal to those who seek or hold public office.