A Call to Faithful Citizenship

Being Politically Responsible in Today’s World

Created by Kristen Dempsey, 2008
What does it mean to be Catholic?

As Catholics we have certain obligations:

- Celebrating the Sacraments
- Proclaiming the Gospel
- Performing works of Charity and Justice
Political Involvement: A Moral Obligation

“In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

Forming Consciences, no. 13
Baptism → Political Action

“This obligation is rooted in our baptismal commitment to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.”

Forming Consciences, no. 13
Role of the Church

- To form people’s consciences on issues
  NOT tell them how to vote
- To shape society based solidly on the Church’s vision and values
  NOT endorse parties or engage in partisanship

To respect each person’s freedom of conscience
Our Role as Catholic Americans

“The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society is proper to the lay faithful.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, no. 29
“Catholics have a lifelong and serious obligation to form their CONSCIENCES in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church.”

Forming Consciences, no. 17
Conscience Formation

1. Desire to Embrace Goodness and Truth
2. Study Scripture and the Teachings of the Church
3. Examine the Facts and Background Information
4. Reflect Prayerfully
2. Studying Scripture and Church Teaching
Biblical Foundation: Genesis

- Created in the Image of God
  - “God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:26-27)

- Stewardship of the Earth
  - “The Lord then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.” (Genesis 2:15)
Biblical Foundation: Hebrew Bible

Against Unjust Laws

“Woe to those who enact unjust statutes and who write oppressive decrees, depriving the needy of judgment and robbing my people’s poor of their rights, making widows their plunder and orphans their prey!” (Isaiah 10:1-2)
Freedom from Oppression

“He happy those whose help is in the
God of Jacob, … Who keeps
faith forever, secures justice for
the oppressed, gives food to the
hungry. The Lord sets captives
free;
the Lord gives
sight to the blind. The Lord raises
up those that were bowed
down; the Lord loves the just.”
(Psalm 146:5-10)

All One in Christ
“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

Wage Justice
“Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters have reached ears of the Lord of hosts.” (James 5:4)
Catholic Social Teaching: Seven Themes

1. Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation
Catholic Social Teaching: Seven Themes

3. Rights and Responsibilities
Catholic Social Teaching: Seven Themes

4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
Catholic Social Teaching: Seven Themes

6. Solidarity

7. Care for God’s Creation
For More Information

- **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship**
  - Conscience Formation, #17-39
  - Catholic Social Teaching, #40-56

- **USCCB Website**
  - www.usccb.org

- **Faithful Citizenship Website**
  - www.faithfulcitizenship.org

- **Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Vatican II)**
Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Conscience Formation, 1776-1802
- Freedom (of action & conscience), 1730-1738
- Social Justice, 1928-1938
- Common Good, 1905-1912
- CST 1: Dignity of the Human Person, 1700-1715
- CST 2: Human community, 1878-1885
- CST 3: Responsibility & Participation, 1913-1917
- CST 6: Human Solidarity, 1939-1942
- CST 7: Creation, 299, 301, 307