

Citizenship: Nobody Said It Would Be Easy

Election Day 2018 approaches. How many campaign messages get past robocall solicitations is unknown, but consultants use this approach to target single-issue voters. We need be careful.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship (FCFC), is a 51-page practical guide worth reading when preparing to vote.

The bishops highlight the voting "decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching." The guide emphasizes the "...dignity of the human person, as discovered by reason and confirmed by revelation, (to) be at the forefront of all political considerations."

For Catholics, Evangelicals, Muslims and those of other faiths, some issues, such as abortion, are as self-evidently evil as life, liberty and pursuit of happiness are this country's self-evident truths.

The FCFC recognizes other direct threats to our principles, namely racism, poverty, hunger and unemployment. This list effectively represents a non-exhaustive catalog of Catholic Charities services. Our mission statement "to serve God's people for the common good, with compassion, dignity and respect," calls us to "...work in solidarity with the Church and other people of good will in advocating for justice."

Using FCFC's non-partisan priorities:

■ Racism ranks high on the list of intrinsic evils because it is a personal choice to deliberately degrade another's race or ethnicity, and champion one's own racial superiority. It is a zero sum agenda: someone has to lose in order for another to win.

■ Poverty is a doorway to disease, substandard

Charitably Speaking



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mortality rates and excuses for racism. Disparities between rich and poor lead to violence and declining educational achievements. Unlike abortion and racism, however, it is not usually a personal choice.

■ Hunger haunts our country.

A Russian proverb says, "A full stomach likes to preach about fasting." As Paul Revere and the Raiders once sang, "Too much talk and not enough action" for hundreds of the people of our area who daily go to sleep hungry and wake up hungry.

■ Unemployment is alive as evidenced by area churches who plan for bigger crowds for meals this Thanksgiving. Employed people generally do not look for a meal at a shelter, church or community center to celebrate holidays.

■ Justice, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.

But advocating for justice means eliminating human trafficking, fittingly labeled "a crime against humanity," by Pope Francis, and ending the scourge of domestic violence. It also means welcoming the stranger seeking work, and affording opportunities for housing, education and safety for the marginalized.

Elections sometimes require holding our noses and swallowing hard while voting for someone

with whom we ardently disagree on one issue in order to struggle against others that are also intrinsically immoral. As with other choices Catholics make, we vote "guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching," with no single political position sufficient to guarantee a Catholic voter's support or opposition.

Nobody ever guaranteed this would be easy.

Info: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/>

'As Catholics, we
are not single-
issue voters.'

—United States Conference of
Catholic Bishops, Forming Conscien-
ces for Faithful Citizenship
