

LIVING OUR FAITH at St Philip Neri

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Faithful Citizenship. Every Catholic is called to an active and faith-filled citizenship. Every four years since 1976, the Administrative Committee of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued a statement on participation in the electoral process.



What follows are some excerpts from their 2003 statement, "Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility," as well as some tools to help you in your discernment process this election season.

Faithful citizenship calls Catholics to see civic responsibilities through the eyes of faith and to bring our moral convictions to public life. The Catholic community is a diverse community of faith, not an interest group. We enter public life not to impose sectarian doctrine but to act on our moral convictions, to share our experience in serving the poor and vulnerable, and to participate in the dialogue over our nation's future.

"As we approach the elections of 2004, we renew our call to a new kind of politics focused on moral principles not on the latest polls, on the needs of the poor and the vulnerable not the contributions of the rich and powerful, and on the pursuit of the common good not the demands of special interests."

- Faithful Citizenship, US Bishops 2003

What does it mean to be a Catholic living in the United States in the year 2004 and beyond? As *Catholics*, the election and the policy choices that follow it call us to recommit ourselves to carry the values of the Gospel and church teaching into the public square. As *citizens and residents of the United States*, we have the duty to participate now and in the future in the debates and choices over the values, vision and leaders that will guide our nation. This dual calling of faith and citizenship is at the heart of what it means to be an American Catholic. Faithful citizenship calls us to seek "a place at the table" for all God's children in the 2004 elections and beyond.

Remember to vote by November 2, 2004!

Elections Toolkit



How can Catholic Social Teaching guide our discernment this election season?

Seven main themes comprise the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. The following themes and questions were developed by the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center in Seattle and are meant to serve as a basic framework as you engage and evaluate the candidates and consider your Faithful Citizenship. They can be adapted for local, state, and national candidates.

Call to family, community, and participation.

Every person has a right to participate and a corresponding duty to work for the advancement of the common good.

What steps will you take to advocate for jobs, poverty reduction, and the rights of documented and undocumented immigrants?

Care for God's Creation.

In our use of creation, we must be guided by a concern for generations to come. We show our respect for the Creator by our care for creation.

What international and state initiatives will you support and act on to protect the environment?

Dignity of work and the rights of workers.

The economy must serve the people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's act of creation.

How will your plans for creating jobs provide for sustainable living and environmental safeguards?

Life and dignity of the human person.

Every person is created in the image and likeness of God. We believe that every human life is sacred.

What are your positions on abortion and the death penalty? How will you reduce the use of violence in responding to terrorism?

☑ **Option for the poor and vulnerable.**

Jesus, who identified himself with “the least of these,” came to preach “good news to the poor...and to set the downtrodden free.” The Church calls on all of us to embrace this preferential option for the poor.

How will your budget priorities support Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and those who are most vulnerable?

☑ **Rights and responsibilities.**

Every person has a right to the conditions for living a decent life - faith and family, food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing.

How will your policies contribute to increased access to affordable housing and health care?

☑ **Solidarity.**

We are *all* responsible *for all*. At the core of solidarity is the pursuit of justice & peace.

How will you support debt relief to the world's poorest countries? What state measures will you pursue to support refugees and victims of trafficking?

Adapted from A Matter of Spirit, a publication of Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center www.ipjc.org

Online Resources for 2004 Elections

US Conference of Catholic Bishops

Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility

www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship

NETWORK: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Evaluates presidential candidates on affordable housing, budget and taxes, global peace & security, immigration & health care.

www.networklobby.org/nep/Election2004/chart.aspx

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Examines candidates on issues of global concern: peace and security, economic justice and integrity of creation.

www.maryknollogc.org/election.htm

Paulist Fathers' Young Adult Ministry

Looks at where the presidential candidates stand on the issues of life, social justice, foreign policy and family.

www.bustedhalo.com/dimensions/elections_index.htm

Election Prayer

O God of justice and compassion.

You have called us to use our gifts to your glory.

You challenge us to claim your power and presence in us.

Today we lift up the gift of citizenship that we have been given in the United States.

We give thanks for the opportunity to participate in this democracy.

We know that you expect us to use the gifts you have given us.

We will step forth in faith.

We will become faithful citizens.

We will use our gifts.

We will study the issues.

We will study your word and the guidance you have given us.

We will pray for our democracy, our current elected leaders, and our future leaders.

We will seek to support the candidates that we think best reflect our values.

We will use our power.

We will claim our gifts.

We will vote on Tuesday, November 2. And when the elections are over, we will pledge to support those elected through prayer and regular communication of our concerns to them.

Thank you God for your gifts and the opportunities you see before us.

Amen.

-National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice



**Ballots go in the mail October 15
Ballots are due by 8 PM November 2
Postmarks do not count!**