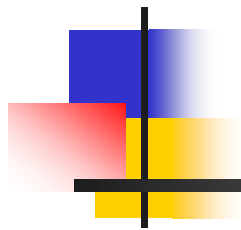


FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

**Political and Ecclesial Context for
Social Mission in an Election Year**



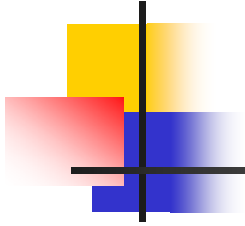
Social Ministry Gathering

February 25, 2008

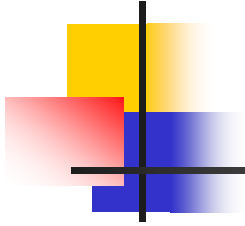
John Carr, Executive Director

Justice, Peace and Human Development

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



■ Political Context



- **Ecclesial
Context**



God Is Love

According to Pope Benedict XVI,

“charity must animate the entire lives of the lay faithful and therefore also their political activity, lived as ‘social charity’”

(Deus Caritas Est, no. 29).



Church and Politics

"It recognizes that it is not the church's responsibility to make this teaching prevail in political life.

Rather, the church wishes to help form consciences in political life

and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice

as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest."

Benedict XVI ...God is Love...Deus Caritas Est



Bishops: *Renewed Politics*

- ***Focused more on moral principles than on the latest polls***
- ***Focused more on the needs of the weak than on benefits for the strong***
- ***Focused more on the pursuit of the common good than on the demands of narrow interests***

US Catholic Bishops *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*



Catholic "AND"

- **Human Life AND Dignity**
- **Human Rights AND Responsibilities**
- **Priority for Poor AND Vulnerable**
- **Solidarity AND Subsidiarity**
- **Care for the Earth AND for 'Wretched of the Earth'**
- **Charity AND Justice**
- **Worship AND Work for Justice and Peace**
- **National AND Global**
- **Common Good**



The Catholic BUT

- All life is sacred, but not all issues are equal...
- The Culture of life begins with the protection of unborn, but...
- Death Penalty... State has right, but ...
- Faith-based initiative.. but
- The Market ...but



Catholic Social Teaching

■ **“AND “R” US...**

■ **“We Be BUTS”**



Faithful Citizenship

This process and draft reflects both

continuity and change.

- It builds on and continues the tradition of a U.S bishops' statement every four years on Catholic responsibilities in an election year.
- Faithful Citizenship, developed with the active collaboration of key USCCB committees, was voted on in November by the body of bishops.(200-4!)...



Faithful Citizenship

- FC is an effort to *form consciences*, not a voter guide.
 - Found their voice...teachers and pastors
- addresses more clearly the ethical distinctions between issues... links among them
 - matters which are intrinsically evil and must be resisted and
 - other affirmative moral obligations which involve prudential judgments.



Faithful Citizenship

- 1.) a bishops' reflection. (p 1-17)**
- 2.) a summary of USCCB policy positions, (p 19-28)**
- 3.) 10 key challenges for campaign (p 29-31) and**
- 4.) a short version/ bulletin insert.**



Faithful Citizenship

- Bishops seek to help Catholics *form their consciences ...*, so they can make sound moral choices in addressing these challenges.
- *Do not tell Catholics how to vote.* The responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience.



Faithful Citizenship

- This is *not new teaching*.... taught by Bishops' Conference and the whole Church.
- Many voter guidesencourage Catholics to seek those *resources that are authorized* by their own bishops, their state Catholic conferences, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.
- intended to reflect and *complement, not substitute* for, the ongoing teaching of bishops in our own dioceses and states



Faithful Citizenship

- **Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to *examine candidates' positions on issues* and should consider *candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance.***



Faithful Citizenship

- Catholics may feel *politically disenfranchised*, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to human life and dignity.
- 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.



Directions

- **Politically “Homeless”**
 - **“Bernadin”**
 - **More, not less engagement.
Mixed Marriage...**
 - **A ways to go...(Kelly)**



Faithful Citizenship

- **Two Foundations:**
 - Conscience
 - Prudence
- **Two Duties:**
 - Resist Evil
 - Pursue Good
- **Two Temptations:**
 - No Distinctions...
 - Nothing Else Matters...



Conscience

- The Church equips her members 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).



Prudence

- 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 ability to deliberate over alternatives, determine what is fitting to a specific context, and to act....accompanied by courage
- It is a call to do the hard things, not just what we want to do...*(wouldn't be prudent)*



Two Duties

Resist and oppose what is intrinsically evil...

There are some things we must never do 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 ...abortion.

- *Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified.*



Two Duties

- Opposition to intrinsically evil acts opens our eyes to the good we must do... *our positive duty to contribute to the common good and to act in solidarity with those in need.*
- Pope John Paul II: “ *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*” (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52).
- Benedict XVI...More than No...Yes to life and dignity
- Both opposing evil *and* doing good are essential obligations.



Two Temptations

One... *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 not just one issue among many.



Two Temptations

TWO, 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, the use of torture war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care, or an unjust immigration policy ...not optional concerns which can be dismissed.



The Doctrinal Note

"A well formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals...

The Christian faith is an integral unity and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine.

A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility toward the common good.

The Doctrinal Note on Catholics and Politics



Faithful Citizenship

Catholics often face difficult choices about how to vote.

A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who takes a position in favor of an intrinsic evil, such as abortion or racism, if the voter's intent is to support that position

At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to *justify indifference* to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity.



Faithful Citizenship

There may be times when a Catholic who rejects a candidate's unacceptable position may decide to *vote for that candidate for other morally grave reasons*. Voting in this way would be permissible only for truly grave moral reasons, not to advance narrow interests or partisan preferences or to ignore a fundamental moral evil.



Faithful Citizenship

These decisions should take into account a candidate's *commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue.*



Faithful Citizenship

In the end, this is a decision to be made by each Catholic guided by a conscience formed by Catholic moral teaching.



Advocacy

POVERTY
IN AMERICA

A Threat to the Common Good

Catholic Charities USA Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America

Advocacy





Faithful Citizenship:

- **“Political, Not Partisan”**
 - Not cheerleader, chaplain, advocate, but challenge
- **“Principled, Not Ideological”**
 - Don’t give on fundamentals, but open...
- **“Civil, Not Soft”**
 - Make our case, but don’t impugn motives/respect/persuasion/justice/ charity
- **“Engaged, Not Used”**
 - Our agenda.. Our turf...honors...relationships

JustPHUD



Department of Justice, Peace and
Human Development

•
John Carr, Executive Director