

The election is fast approaching and the Vicar General, on behalf of Cardinal Cupich, has asked that we distribute an election guide to help form consciences from a Catholic perspective. The full document from the U.S. Bishops is called *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* and can be found here: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>

Part of our duty as faithful Catholic disciples of Jesus, is to be pro-life in all its many facets which this guide enumerates, including protecting the unborn, elderly, just treatment for people of all races, stewardship over the environment, promoting marriage between one man and one woman, and more. This year's guide has a new introduction that includes this from the bishops: "*The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks our most vulnerable and voiceless brothers and sisters and destroys more than a million lives per year in our country alone.*"

Abortion is obviously not the only important issue for Catholics but a unique one that is not merely a question of prudential judgment in which people of good will might disagree, like what a just tax rate or just wage might be. To that point, in 2004 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a document on the *Worthiness to Receive Holy Communion*, that also has a section about abortion/euthanasia and voting that says:

A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate precisely because of the candidate's permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. When a Catholic does not share a candidate's stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.

I know most everyone reading this is well aware of who they're voting for and why. Pope Francis made the comment that our presidential election is a choice between the lesser of two evils. Each of us, with consciences formed by our Catholic faith as best as they can be, must vote and then be willing to stand before Jesus with that decision. In the end, politicians don't really change the culture. Christ wants us to, and then we will see politicians and parties more aligned with the Gospel.

--- This Sunday we are reminded that Jesus came as to save us as a suffering servant; "***Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear.***" Jesus said that He would give His life as a ransom for us. Receiving the gift of the Lord's redemption and forgiveness is so freeing but admittedly requires our humility.

It's hard to acknowledge our own personal guilt, so we can be prone to displace our guilt onto others. Unforgiven sins can manifest in a desire to highlight someone else's injustices so that we don't have to acknowledge what lies within ourselves. We can feel self-righteous even by condemning people from the past, presuming we would have been insightful and brave and not just gone along with the errors and evils of that time. It doesn't cost us anything to condemn them.

When we don't personally acknowledge Christ's saving, atoning death...scapegoating abounds. The Levitical priests of old would speak the sins of the people onto a goat to get rid of them and send the goat away and a second would be sacrificed. There is so much blame and lack of personal responsibility right now, but the only path to peace of soul and for society is to receive the Lord's loving mercy.

The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

God bless,

Fr. Mike