



Virtuous Vote

A Catholic Perspective on
Today's Public Policy Issues

“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”
- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 13

Since participation in political life is a moral obligation, Catholics need to form their conscience with the mind and heart of the Church on issues of consequence. The Virtuous Vote series outlines and examines eight important moral and political issues.

Abortion

The Catholic Church has unequivocally taught that abortion is an intrinsic evil, which always must be opposed. It violates the fifth commandment of “thou shalt not kill” as it destroys an innocent human life. No circumstance warrants any person, let alone the parents of a child, to end the life of another human person. Cooperating by voting for a candidate who supports abortion is contrary to God’s law. This is why Pope Saint John Paul II wrote in his Encyclical, *The Gospel of Life* (101):

It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop. A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized. Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace.

Catholics cannot support politicians who advocate for abortion or ‘reproductive rights’ in reference to abortion. While this does not mean Catholics should only care about the abortion issue, it does mean Catholics cannot excuse or dismiss this grave error in judgment concerning politicians political positioning on this issue. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written:

Any politics of human dignity must seriously address issues of racism, poverty, hunger, employment, education, housing, and healthcare ... **But being “right” in such matters can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the “rightness” of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community.** If we understand the human person as the “temple of the Holy Spirit” – the living house of God – then these latter issues fall logically into place as the crossbeams and walls of that house. All direct attacks on innocent human life, such as abortion and euthanasia, strike at the house’s foundation. These directly and immediately violate the human person’s most fundamental right – the right to life. Neglect of these issues is the equivalent of building our house on sand. Such attacks cannot help but lull the social conscience in ways ultimately destructive of other human rights. (1998 Pastoral Letter of the USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, 22)

Thus, for the Catholic, the right to life is foundational to every other issue one considers in voting. As Pope Francis has stated concerning the killing of the preborn: “Their killing in huge numbers,

with the endorsement of States, is a serious problem that undermines the foundations of the construction of justice, compromising the proper solution of any other human and social issue...”

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-francis-pro-life-movement-politicians-defend-life.html>

In summation, abortion is not just one issue among many. It is **the** human rights issue of our time and the preeminent issue of life and importance in this election. As Catholics, it is our duty to protect the most fundamental right of the human person: the right to life. The intentional destruction of innocent human life is intrinsically evil and must always be opposed.

Peter Range, Senior Fellow for Strategic Initiatives, Center for Christian Virtue, peterrange@ccv.org

About Center for Christian Virtue

Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) is Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization. We seek the good of our neighbors by advocating for public policy that reflects the truth of the Gospel. Learn more at CCV.org.

About BuckeyeBallot.com

To help you steward your vote well this November, **CCV has compiled the most comprehensive Voter Guide in our 41-year history.** Our heart is to help you do your own research so you can find the facts and make an informed decision about the men and women on your ballot. **BuckeyeBallot.com** is your source for the most unbiased information available on Ohio's 2024 General Election, including:

A personalized Voter Guide with only the candidates on your ballot.

Free resources to download and share in your church and community.

Links to register to vote, find your polling location, and more!

Get the facts at **BuckeyeBallot.com**, then make your plan to vote!

