



Being Citizens Faithful to the Lord

October 2018

Election Day is November 6. To be the faithful citizens our Lord calls us to be, we must form our consciences through prayer, attentiveness to the Church's teachings, and an understanding of issues and of candidates' positions. As we exercise our ministry of teaching, we wish to offer principles and observations that we believe will be of value to the faithful of our dioceses as we exercise the right to vote in elections this year.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship is a statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (www.faithfulcitizenship.org) which describes how we make good moral choices as we respond to our baptismal call to promote the common good in our nation's political life. We especially encourage you to read paragraphs 34-37 of this statement because they specifically address voting decisions.

There are many issues that require our attention – for example, the defense and protection of all life at every stage, and issues impacting the poor, immigrants, the family, religious liberty, and the environment. Love of God and neighbor means being attentive to all issues that affect the common good.

Some matters have “a special claim on our consciences and our actions” (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, Para. 37*). We are referring here to policies promoting acts that are intrinsically evil because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. “They must always be rejected and opposed and must never be supported or condoned. A prime example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion and euthanasia” (*Para. 22*).

Our Virginia Catholic Conference's website (www.vacatholic.org) also contains information on this year's U.S. Senate candidates' positions on a wide range of issues. This site is a resource for voter education as well as for advocacy throughout the year. We especially encourage you to join the Conference's email network via the site's “Join the Network” feature.

By voting on November 6 and advocating year round, let us be citizens who are truly faithful to the Lord.

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond