

# CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR VOTING (part 1a&b)

*Continued from last week.*

## 1) In Voting, especially for the President, our GOAL is to promote the COMMON GOOD

"The political community . . . exists for the common good: This is its full justification and meaning, and the source of its specific and basic right to exist. The common good embraces all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment" ~Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, 74.

"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."  
Pope Saint John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*

## 2) To do this we have to recognize that not all issues have equal weight. Some issues are foundational.

There is a hierarchy of values. Some issues are more important and outweigh many other issues put together. If we think of the common good for our country as a house, some issues represent "the crossbeams and walls of that house." While others represent the "house's foundation." (see USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 22)

### a. The difference between intrinsic evils and prudential judgements

#### i. Intrinsic evils

**Some issues are always wrong regardless of the circumstances and must always be opposed.**

Catholics must always agree on these issues to remain in good standing with the Catholic Church. One should not vote for a candidate who officially promotes an intrinsic evil (look at their platform to see if they do).

Examples of Intrinsic Evils: Abortion, Euthanasia, Homosexual Marriage, Gender Confusion, Socialism, Racism, Religious Persecution

#### ii. Prudential judgements

**Some issues require a judgement call that requires consideration of the circumstances.** Catholics of good conscience can disagree on these issues. One could even disagree with the pope and bishops on a matter of prudential judgement and remain in good standing with the Catholic Church.

Examples of Prudential Judgement Issues: How to best care for the poor (entitlements vs. tax incentives for charitable giving); capital punishment; how to best care for the environment; education (more funding for public schools vs. offering vouchers for private schools); questions of national defense, healthcare; how to best grow the economy; how to regulate immigration and protect our borders...

### b. Foundational Issues and Intrinsic Evils

Even among those issues which concern intrinsic evils, some issues are more foundational, in that failure to defend them can cause the whole house to collapse. Some evils attack the crossbeams or walls of the "house" of our society and some attack and destroy the foundation.

#### i. Protection of innocent human life

Overcoming direct threats against innocent human life (abortion & Euthanasia) is the "*fundamental human rights issue*" (US Bishops). Pope Saint John Paul II: "This is "the most fundamental human good and the condition for all others", "*the highest priority in our societies*", the right "*upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop.*" "*If the right to life is not defended decisively as a condition for all other rights of the person, all other references to human rights remain deceitful and illusory.*"

"The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed." USCCB, *Introductory letter to Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*

Defense against the intrinsic evil of killing innocent human life (abortion and euthanasia) is the foundational issue that outweighs other issues of prudential judgment (how we care for the poor, the economy, health care, capital punishment, immigration...) and even some other issues regarding intrinsic evils. This is because life is foundational to every other issue. With other issues you are denying someone PART of their rights as a human person, when you kill them, you deny them ALL of their rights as a human person.

Analogy: if someone is attacking your child and trying to kill them, you don't stop to consider if your child has the best health care, or if you need a better job, or if your child is being discriminated against at school. You immediately stop the attack! At that moment, nothing is more important than protecting their life! This scenario aptly describes our country today. Our unborn are under attack through legalized abortion and over sixty million have been killed. We have it within our ability, at the voting booth, to come to their defense.

*Reflection on this week's readings:*

## **POLITICS SEEM TO BRING OUT OUR WORST EMOTIONS**

People often struggle with anger at political leaders and sometimes also at their supporters. People will make harsh comments about someone's Facebook post and then get "defriended." We all seem to have shorter fuses these days.

Consider however what our readings tell us this week:

*"Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the LORD?"*

*"Remember your last days, set enmity aside;"*

*"Hate not your neighbor; remember the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults."*

This does not mean that we can't disagree with others. Nor does it mean we have to completely avoid anger. There is such a thing as righteous anger. But the Bible says: "be angry but sin not."

If we are truly God's children, then we should want to be like God:

*"The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, and rich in compassion."*

The instruction: *"love one another as I have loved you,"* applies also to people we disagree with, and to politicians that we may feel are doing harm to our country.

We who have been forgiven much, must forgive the offenses of others, if we want God to continue to be merciful to us.

The challenge is how we can stand for good in a confused and misguided world, while maintaining God's peace in our hearts.

This is possible, through prayer and surrender to God. We do our part by maintaining a close relationship with God through prayer and the sacraments. We form our conscience through spiritual reading and studying what the Church teaches.

We have resources to help you with this on our parish website (<http://dmsbcatholic.com/pastor/election/>) and mobile app. I also encourage you to listen to Catholic radio (740 AM) and to turn to reliable, balanced, Catholic news sources like: [Catholic News Agency](#), [EWTN](#), or [National Catholic Register](#).

Let us strive to be charitable with one another while we seek to pursue the common good, in accord with a conscience properly formed by the teaching of our Church.

*"Disregard for the right to life, precisely because it leads to the killing of the person whom society exists to serve, is what most directly conflicts with the possibility of achieving the common good..." Pope Saint John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life**