

CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE OUR VOTING

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.

“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*

ii. **Other foundational issues that involve defense against intrinsic evils: Marriage, Gender Confusion, Religious Liberty, Socialism**

Those who have difficulty recognizing the intrinsic evil of the following three issues have the obligation to form their conscience according to church teaching. *“The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it.”* Catechism of the Catholic Church, par. 2088

1. Marriage & Gender Confusion: “It is profoundly immoral and unjust for the government to declare that two people of the same sex can constitute a marriage. The unique meaning of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is inscribed in our bodies as male and female... Mandating marriage redefinition across the country is a tragic error that harms the common good and most vulnerable among us, especially children.” (USCCB Statement) Same sex “marriage” and gender confusion is a direct attack on the family, which is the basic building block of society. Pope Saint John Paul II said: *“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.”* When you destroy the family, society will soon follow. Marriage between one man and one woman is the foundation of the family. It is a good not only for the benefit of the partners, but also for the healthy rearing of children. It is given to us by God, who created us male and female. The state does not have the power to redefine marriage any more than it does to redefine gravity. History shows us that cultures that freely embrace homosexuality collapse after a few generations. These two issues are also used to persecute Christians who are accused of “discrimination,” if they merely hold and practice Biblical beliefs common to all Christians for 2,000 years.

2. Religious Persecution: Religious Liberty is our first and most cherished liberty. This concept was part of the reason behind the founding of our country. Christian organizations and Christian owners of business are having to defend their religious liberty in court due to the unjust directives of previous administration and bad decisions by judges. The current administration has undone many of these attacks on religious liberty and appointed judges who will respect our religious liberty. His opponent has pledged to return to and intensify the religious persecution that began under the previous administration. Examples: HHS mandate; the closing of Catholic adoption agencies...

3. Socialism: *“No one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist”* wrote Pope Pius XI in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), for socialism is “irreconcilable with true Christianity.” Pope Leo XIII, in his encyclical, *Quod Apostolici Muneris* (1878), stated:

“indeed, socialists, stealing the very Gospel itself with a view to deceive more easily the unwary, have been accustomed to distort it so as to suit their own purposes, nevertheless so great is the difference between their depraved teachings and the most pure doctrine of Christ that none greater could exist...”

In another encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891) Pope Leo explains that socialists “rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community” (RN, 4). Socialists “strike at the interests of every wage-earner, since they would deprive him of the liberty of disposing of his wages, and thereby of all hope and possibility of increasing his resources and of bettering his condition in life” (RN 5). Every person has “by nature the right to possess property as his own.” (RN 6)

Pope Saint John XXIII wrote in *Mater et Magistra* (1961) that “no Catholic could subscribe even to moderate Socialism.”