

Our Lady of Hope 2020 Voter Guide

In the U.S. Bishops' Conference 2018 Voters', under revision to meet changing challenges, we find the four basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching: guide (pdf link: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>)

1) Human Dignity: Human life is sacred; the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. *Romans* 12: 9-12: "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good"

(2) Solidarity: We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. *Romans* 13:8-10: "Living rightly means to love one another". The Gospel of Life *Evangelium Vitae... #1*

(3) Subsidiarity: an expression of inalienable human freedom that demands the maximum participation of people in governing their lives with the substitution of others' governance only when necessary. *Quadragesima Anno 79, Centesimus Annus 11, Deus Caritas Est 28*

(4) The Common Good: "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26). The common good can be understood as the social and community dimension of the moral good. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164)

Pope Francis has cautioned Catholics not to vote strictly on party loyalty, but to exercise their consciences. While affirming the Catholic defense of the unborn, Francis reminds us that "Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor; those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection." ("Rejoice and Be Glad." *Apostolic exhortation on holiness*, April 2018).

Here are salient facts regarding eleven major issues in the coming election to which Catholic voters should apply these principles:

ENVIRONMENT: Rising carbon pollution requires reduced use or elimination of fossil fuels, development of carbon-free energy sources and reduced energy use in consumption and manufacture if humanity is to survive. *Genesis* calls us to care for our human habitat. *Laudato Si* 17

ARMS AND MILITARISM: Our military consumes over half of federal expenditures, more than the next ten countries combined, seven trillion dollars since WWII. We are by far the world's largest arms dealer. John Paul II condemned the extensive arms trade and declared the possession of nuclear weapons immoral. The Gospel rejects violence and the Vatican regularly calls for peaceful resolution of differences.

FOREIGN POLICY: Our military presence and military involvements throughout the world and our overt intelligence and surveillance network are marks of a belligerent and cynical world power. Needless wars, proxy wars, and support of oppression have occasioned great misery and killed or displaced millions throughout the world. What should be our role in world affairs? Which candidates would best support justice and charity and work for peace?

HEALTH CARE: John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* (1963) declares health care, the safeguarding of life, a

right. Affordable quality healthcare is necessary for a full and productive life. Abortion and euthanasia are alien to Catholic belief. What policies are best for all?

RACISM: In the wake of George Floyd's death, Americans have been obliged to face the evil of legalized racism and the continued police abuse of people of color. Confronting the economic and social consequences of white privilege is necessary to achieve a just and nonracist society. What is government's responsibility? Who will meet it? What is our individual role?

REFUGEES & MIGRANTS: The Good Samaritan parable instructs us to assist strangers in need. Pope Leo XIII's *On Condition of Labor* (1891) affirms the right to migrate to sustain one's life and one's family's. Church teaching recognizes the right of countries to regulate immigration, with due concern for justice and charity. With over 70 million refugees worldwide, what should be our responsibility, given our natural wealth, development, and prosperity, to assist with resettlement? What is our role as Catholics, in welcoming the stranger in our midst?

COMPENSATION: Since the first encyclical in 1891, the Church has affirmed the right to a living wage, enough for clothing, food, shelter, health, and modest comfort. *Laudato Si* declares that the poor should not be trampled on by powerful interests and a consumer culture that encourages taking more than a fair share of wealth.

INCOME INEQUALITY: The wealth gap between America's richest and poorer families more than doubled from 1989 to 2016, (Pew Research). We have moved from a society with steady employment, living wages, and retirement security for many, to one with concentrated wealth for the very few. A great many are unable to afford housing, college education, health care, and adequate food. Why? How do we restore an equitable balance in distribution of the fruits of labor?

EDUCATION: *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican II) affirms the inalienable right of all to an opportunity for quality education. How do we best ensure this right in an equitable and fair manner?

INCARCERATION: The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world. (716 per 100,000 of the national population). While the United States represents about 4.4 percent of the world's population, it houses around 22 percent of the world's prisoners. The draconian sentences targeting the poor and minorities of the criminal reforms of the 90s are now widely recognized as racist. What can be done to end needless imprisonments? Who will do it?

VOTING RIGHTS: Voting is essential to democracy. Gerrymandering and various forms of voter suppression tip the electoral scales, and disenfranchise entire social classes. All with a right to vote should be able to register easily and vote by mail or nearby, without having to wait hours or pay a poll tax or equivalent. How best to safeguard voting rights?

OUR RESPONSIBILITY: As Catholics our faith compels us to consider such issues, inform ourselves, and weigh the qualifications of candidates to address them. It will often not be easy to determine, on balance, given the array of major issues and their interrelationship, who is the superior candidate. We must, in conscience, do the best we can. We also have a responsibility to assist others in making voting judgments that best serve the common good and the dignity of every fellow citizen. We must learn to engage respectfully with others regarding political issues. Our goal as Christians must be to foster the dignity of all, to recognize that we are the Body of Christ, in love of neighbor and our commitment to justice and peace.

-Social Justice & Peace Commission, Our Lady of Hope Church