



Abortion is
no more a
“single issue”
than was
slavery.

It is, instead,
a **DEFINING**
one which
shapes the
future of the
nation.

CARDINAL FRANCIS
GEORGE

PRO-LIFE NEWS

Our Sacred Duty

New Oxford Review ~ November 2011

“[It is our] duty to defend the Gospel of Life, to give voice to the innocents who are daily led to the slaughter..”

Every election cycle is an opportunity to combat the evil of abortion, and every election cycle that passes without an earnest effort at fighting is an opportunity squandered.”

Almost There!

The NJ 20/20 Campaign’s goal of **2,400 Masses** offered “*For the Protection of Unborn Children*” is within reach!

Only 89 more Masses are needed by 12/31/2020.

Won’t you consider helping us reach this goal, and keep the unborn at the forefront of Catholic thought and petitions?

Simply arrange for a Mass at any Catholic Church and complete the form in the St. Martha Room to be counted in the Campaign’s efforts.

Upcoming Events

40 Days for Life

September 23 - November 1

Cherry Hill Women’s Center

Kings Hwy, Cherry Hill

Mon - Sat 7 AM to 7 PM

Sign up, even for just

ONE HOUR of prayer, at:

www.40daysforlife.com

NJ Right to Life

Annual Volvo Raffle

Contact Tracye for tickets at

mc9oak@comcast.net

\$10 donation/ticket

DEADLINE to obtain tix:

November 8

LIFE is at the Heart of the Common Good

"Preeminent."pre·em·i·nent, *adjective*.
Definition: surpassing all others; very distinguished in some way, having paramount rank or importance.
Miriam – Webster Dictionary

As voters prepare to cast their ballots in what is arguably the most significant election in their lifetime, they must evaluate the position of candidates on a multitude of very important issues. Immigration, racial justice, abortion, the environment, healthcare, religious freedom and many others.

So what is the obligation of Catholics in weighing these complex matters? Are all issues of equal gravity? How do we inform our conscience to the greatest moral principles so that we may vote with them in mind?

The US Catholic Conference of Bishops offers important guidance in answering these questions. In doing so, the bishops refer to the "preeminent issue" - that which surpasses all others in importance, which involves "fundamental and inalienable rights" (CCC 1907), for which there is only a single moral solution, a non-negotiable moral solution.

That preeminent voting issue identified by our bishops is abortion. By an official vote earlier this year, the Conference enshrined this "preeminent" designation in its "Voters Guide for Conscientious Catholics," updated every four years prior to our country's presidential elections.

So how does this episcopal instruction translate to someone like me as a Catholic voter? I'm not a religious scholar or a theologian, but it's clear to me that people of good conscience and good will can have differing opinions on the best policies to address health care, poverty, immigration, racial justice and the environment. For such important issues, there can be multiple, morally acceptable policy choices that attempt to balance principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, private action versus public action.

By example, we can robustly debate how many immigrants our country should welcome and under what conditions. But we can not debate how many unborn children can be aborted or under what conditions their intentional killing is acceptable.

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We can joust over how much government funding should be allocated for poverty and housing programs. But there can be no debate about how much funding there should be for abortion - zero.

In short, there is no deliberation in the case of abortion. We are dealing with an action that is always intrinsically evil, always and in every circumstance (*Veritatis Splendor*, 52).

Some argue that treating abortion as the preeminent voting issue is single issue voting, and that voters should focus more broadly on the multitude of issues that address the common good. But as Catholic voters, we can not evaluate contributions to the common good as if they are all of equal moral significance.

There are many life issues. There are many issues that address the common good which we are obligated to advance. There are many sins against life. What our bishops are exhorting us to recognize is that some sins are more grave than others. Some sins strike at the heart of the common good because "they strike at life itself" (Voters Guide). Abortion fits that definition.

It is within this moral framework that we as Catholic voters must evaluate the acceptability and worthiness of political candidates.

Personal attributes often give a window into a candidate's character, values and priorities. A candidate may have a distasteful personality. But what must drive our voting decisions is what *public policies* that candidate supports, what appointments he or she would make to advance those policies, and what laws he or she would sign if elected. What the candidate's political party platform says about the preeminent issue is also important, recognizing that all elected officials depend on the support of their party to be successful.

Designating abortion as the preeminent voting issue in this upcoming election is a clarion call by our bishops to *put first things first*. As Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI stated, the right to life is the "pre-supposition" of every other human right. To state as much is not reducing Catholic moral concerns to a single issue. It is to establish priorities, giving preeminence to the most foundational.

Tracye McArdle

Coordinator

Mater Ecclesiae Pro-Life Apostolate



Priorities at the Polls

By Most Reverend Joseph F. Naumann

As Catholics approach the polls, we are asked to weigh many important issues. The U.S. bishops have reaffirmed that “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.”¹ While they did warn us not to “dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty, and the death penalty,” they did give priority to upholding and defending our brothers’ and sisters’ most basic right—to live.

Abortion tragically ends someone’s life when he or she is most vulnerable and most in need of loving protection. Abortion is an intrinsic evil, meaning that it is never permitted or morally justified, regardless of individual circumstances or intentions. The personal and societal consequences of attacks against human life, whether at its earliest stages or at its final stages, are all the more serious because most often they are “carried out in the very heart of and with the complicity of the family—the family which by its nature is called to be the ‘sanctuary of life.’”² This is the place where a person should be *most* loved, cherished, and protected.

Catholics are called to defend human life wherever it is threatened and stand up for human dignity wherever it is violated. The enormous number of human lives destroyed by abortion is one factor that elevates its importance. The most recent available data indicates over 2,000 children per day die from abortion in the United States. Since abortion was legalized in 1973, over 61 million children have been killed—and untold numbers of women and men suffer in the aftermath.

The tragedy of abortion is also distinct in that it is currently legal to directly and intentionally take the life of an innocent human being. Current laws in our country fail to

protect the lives of unborn children. Our highest Court does not recognize children in their mothers’ wombs as persons and claims that abortion is a constitutional right. Further, many political leaders work actively to increase access to abortion. Some falsely describe it as health care and even as a basic human right.

People of good will must boldly stand up against this intrinsic evil, especially when it is occurring on a massive scale, implemented in law and funded, in some instances, by the government. As believers and citizens inspired by the Gospel and guided by the shepherds of our Church, we must do what we can to end violence in the womb, to ensure that unborn children are fully recognized and protected by our laws, and to support mothers and fathers in embracing life.



Archbishop Naumann is Archbishop of Kansas City, Kansas and Chair of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities | usccb.org/prolife

¹ *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*, Introductory Letter, p. 6. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2020. <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

² Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae*, (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 11.

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Please find the full text of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* at www.faithfulcitizenship.org.