

iVoteCatholic

We find ourselves in a time of great uncertainty and division. We are in the midst of a global health pandemic that brought much of the world's economy to its knees and brought to light great inequalities that exist in the labor, educational, housing, and financial sectors.

We also live in a country that is starkly divided along political ideologies, with all sides hoping to create a better world but with very different ways of accomplishing that. For decades now, our country has plunged further and further into division, and unfortunately recent times have seen an increase in uncivilized and unkind language, an uptick of personal attacks on people rather than respectful dialogues on our differences and how we might work together.

Key to this division is the right-left, Republican and Democrat divide. Within families, communities, and parishes people find themselves pitted against one another because of their political affiliations. Often times, no matter how alike two people might be on a particular issue, if one identifies as red and the other as blue, it is impossible to build or maintain a respectful relationship.

As members of the Catholic Church, we are called to something different, something not of this political world. **Our allegiance falls not with a political party, but with Jesus Christ and his teachings of mercy, justice, and compassion.** Neither political party has a monopoly on Catholic teaching, and it is therefore our responsibility to judge candidates not by the color of their yard signs but by their adherence to sanctity of all life, from conception to natural death, and their care for all people, especially the poor and vulnerable.

To support our Archdiocese in this mission, we have developed **iVoteCatholic**: tools for Catholic communities to use over the seven weeks prior to the November 3rd election day. Over these seven weeks, we will look at the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching – what they are, how we define them, how they apply to our lives, and how we can use them to determine for whom we will vote. Each week there will be resources for liturgy, classrooms, meetings, discussions, and social media drawn from the scriptures, Church teachings, and our popes. We encourage you to explore the materials and find ways to learn, pray, discuss, teach, and act on these themes. The USCCB has published a resource, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, and **iVoteCatholic** will help to bring the teachings and ideals of that document to our community.

At the end of the program, we hope that all people will be able to evaluate their lives and determine ways that they can live more closely aligned to our faith, including voting not based on political affiliation but on how closely a candidate adheres to Gospel values.

Most of us are not called to serve in elected office, but we are ALL called to participate in our community – voting for the candidates in local, state, and national elections that will help bring about the Kingdom of God, and then holding leaders accountable to those values. If we let the light, mercy, and love of Christ shine through us and guide us in our lives (and our voting), we can rest assured that we are living out our Gospel call to be faithful and just and doing God's will.

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