



Using Catholic Social Teachings as a Guide to Voting in the Upcoming Elections

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While no one candidate will check all the boxes,
you can use this guide to weigh your choices in local, state, and national elections.

Catholic Social Teaching Issues	Consider a Candidate Who...	Related Church Teachings
<p>1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare • Housing • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports life in all stages, from conception to natural death • Promotes affordable healthcare for all • Increases adequate housing for the poor • Supports access to education for all, from Head Start through college 	<p>Benedict XVI "The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner." (Charity in Truth, No. 32)</p> <p>Bible There are many gospel stories of Jesus healing the sick and teaching and welcoming people, including children.</p>
<p>2. Support for the Common Good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic policies to support families • Social programs to strengthen communities • Strong infrastructure: roads, electric grids, water resources, public transportation • Exercise of vote • Civic participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls out and works to end exploitative economic activity • Addresses income inequality through tax policy and legislation such as the Child Tax Credit and daycare subsidies • Protects Medicare and Social Security • Supports sensible campaign reform legislation to reduce the influence of money in politics • Encourages faithful citizenship through voting and civic participation 	<p>Bible I am my brother's and sister's keeper. (Genesis 4:8-15, the story of Cain and Abel.)</p> <p>Francis "Let us not forget that responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation." (The Joy of the Gospel, no. 220, quoting the USCCB Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2007)</p> <p>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Good government intervention is "that which truly 'helps' other social groups contribute to the common good by directing, urging, restraining, and regulating economic activity as 'the occasion requires and necessity demands.'" (Economic Justice for All, no. 124)</p>
<p>3. Rights and Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of human rights • Protection of the right to live by providing the necessary means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ food, ✓ clothing, ✓ shelter, ✓ medical care, and ✓ the necessary social services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects the rights of all people including those in marginalized communities (Black, Brown, LGBTQ+, the elderly, and the disabled) • Protects and expands affordable health care for all • Supports voting rights legislation that protects minorities, the elderly, and disabled • Protects peaceful protests; respects diverse views • Vigorously supports freedom of speech for policy makers, federal employees, and for all • Supports common sense gun control • Prevents the use of the military for domestic control 	<p>John XXIII "We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life." (Peace on Earth, no.11)</p> <p>John XXIII "In human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men, the duty that is of recognizing and respecting that right." (Peace on Earth, no. 30)</p> <p>Francis "While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or violated." (On Fraternity and Social Friendship, no. 22)</p>
<p>4. Prioritizing the Needs of the Poor and Vulnerable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, medical, and housing support • Protection of immigrants and refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports nutrition assistance programs, school lunch programs, and Medicaid benefits • Works on meaningful immigration reform, supports due process for migrants and asylum seekers, and opposes extra-judicial ICE deportation measures • Protects Social Security and Disability benefits • Supports affordable housing 	<p>Bible The Lord hears the cry of the poor. (Job 34:20-28) What you do for the least among you, you do for Jesus. (Mt 25:34-40)</p> <p>Bible The Israelites (Old Testament) and the Holy Family (New Testament) were refugees and immigrants. Old and New Testaments</p> <p>Leo XIV "Our Church has always recognized in migrants a living presence of the Lord who, on the day of judgement, will say to those on his right: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me.'" (Quoting Mt 25:35 in Dilexi Te 73)</p>

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<p>5. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive work • Decent and fair wages • Right to organize and join unions • Social justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects workers from deregulation • Supports the enforcement of worker rights to organize for better working conditions and wages • Advocates for a living wage, and addresses high housing costs • Advocates for safe working conditions • Promotes legislation for worker-friendly policies, such as benefits for part-time work, paid family leave, child care assistance, and disability and retirement benefits 	<p>John Paul II “All these rights, together with the need for the workers themselves to secure them, give rise to the right of association, that is to form associations for the purpose of defending the vital interest of those employed... These associations are called labor or trade unions.” (On Human Work, no. 20)</p> <p>Francis “Growth in justice requires...decisions, programs, mechanisms, specifically geared to a better distribution of income, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor.” (The Joy of the Gospel, no. 204)</p> <p>Leo XIII “...workers’ wages [should] be sufficient to enable them comfortably to support a family...” (Rerum Novarum, no. 46)</p>
<p>6. Solidarity with All Throughout the World, Regardless of Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuit of world justice and peace • Recognition of the humanity and equality of all • Unity and solidarity among all nations through world-wide organizations and peacekeeping efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advances the work of, and supports US participation in the United Nations, the World Court, the World Health Organization, and USAID to help vulnerable countries (including support for the work of Catholic Relief Services) • Acts to create good will throughout the world • Has concrete recommendations for international justice, solidarity, dialogue, and the community of nations, i.e., a recipe for peace • Works to reduce the polarization of and gap between the rich and the poor to bring greater equity of opportunity and human dignity to all • Supports nuclear and other weapons disarmament pacts and treaties 	<p>Paul VI “If you want peace, work for justice.” (For the Celebration of the Day of Peace, Rome, January 1, 1972)</p> <p>Bible The good Samaritan, an outsider, recognized the humanity of the wounded Jew and treated him as a neighbor by caring for him. (Luke 10:25-37)</p> <p>John XXIII “The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.” (On Christianity and Social Progress, no. 157)</p> <p>John Paul II Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. “Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements.” (Homily in Coventry, England, on May 30, 1982)</p> <p>Bible “...and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4)</p>
<p>7. Stewardship of God’s Creation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the environment • Protect communities that are vulnerable to environmental degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects public lands, parks, green spaces • Backs laws to help vulnerable communities facing natural disasters and wildfires, and those deprived of clean water and air • Supports alternative energy sources, recycling, public transportation • Supports the Paris Climate Accord 	<p>Francis “...nature is at our disposal, to enjoy and use properly. Yet it also means that we are not its masters. Stewards, but not masters.” (Speaking to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 2014)</p> <p>Benedict XVI “Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other.” (Charity in Truth, nos. 48, 51)</p>

For more information about the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, explore the US Catholic Conference of Bishops’ website at:

[Seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching USCCB.](#)

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