

# The Catholic Bishops' Call to Faithful Citizenship:

Highlights (Bulletin 2 of 4)

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FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP: A CALL TO POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES can be found in its entirety along with other documents and readings by going to

<http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/>

## Determining right and wrong — and taking action

In “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship,” the Catholic bishops urge everyone to participate in the political life of their communities and also contribute their talents to public service.

“In the Catholic Tradition,” the bishops remind us, “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation...our baptismal commitment [calls us] to follow Jesus Christ and to bear Christian witness in all we do.”

We are called to transform political parties—and transform the world by seeking the common good for everyone—even for those who cannot vote.

The Church cannot enter “the political battle”; this is the responsibility of the faithful.

But the Church participates as teacher in the formation of conscience, that part of our mind and soul that guides us to do what is right. In Catholic tradition, this is a sensibility that is formed through faith and reason.

This involves developing the virtue of prudence, the ability to discern what is good. Prudence calls us to consider moral principles—**and to act.**



“Worship pleasing to God can never be a purely private matter, without consequences for our relationship with others: it demands a public witness to our faith.”

- Pope Benedict XVI

We are called to take action against taking of human life, unjust war, torture, war crimes, suffering from hunger or lack of health care, unjust immigration policies and other social evils.

Individually, one person cannot attend to all these concerns, but we can support one another’s efforts, since “we are not factions, but one family of faithful filling the mission of Jesus Christ.”

We must oppose intrinsic evil, such as the taking of human life. Yet one cannot permit “indifference or inattentiveness to other moral issues involving human life and dignity.”

In sum, Christian love involves redeeming the social order.

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