The Season of Creation Webinar:

Putting our Faith into Action through Voting

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Overview

• Focus on each person as a beloved child
• Call to active participation all year
• Faithful citizenship is an exercise in accompaniment
• Hear and respond to our brothers and sisters
Creating a Culture of Encounter

“Although there are many reasons to be discouraged, amid many prophets of destruction and condemnation, and so many negative and despairing voices, may you be a positive force, for this society.

Like the engine of a train, may you be the driving force leading all towards their destination.

May you be sowers of hope, builders of bridges and agents of dialogue and harmony.”

Pope Francis, Apostolic Journey, April 29th, 2017 (emphasis added)
“In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 13

“Even those who cannot vote have the right to have their voices heard on issues that affect their lives and the common good.”

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 16
Participation in political life in light of fundamental moral principles is an essential duty for every Catholic and all people of good will.

“People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens.”

- Evangelii Gaudium, no. 220

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, no. 57
CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and encyclical documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. Human life is threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional taking of life, in war or terrorist attack, is always wrong. Catholic teaching calls us to work to avoid war because we must protect the right to life by working effectively to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every person is whether they threaten or enhance the life and dignity of the human person.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—its economics and politics, its laws and policies—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. The defense of human life and the pursuit of justice and peace by the Church are not just one aspect of our mission; they are at the core of the Church's social teaching

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another to our families, and to the larger society.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral truth is that our most vulnerable members are facing. In a society scarred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our traditions recall the story of the Last Judgment (Mk. 12:28-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

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. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice." The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.
FORMING CONSCIENCES FOR FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

The Two Feet of Love in Action

Session for Teens

Introduction
In Deuteronomy 10, Pope Benedict XVI describes the "inseparable bond between love of God and love of neighbor" (no. 3). The experience of God's love, in turn, should move us to live our lives to the fullest—enriched by the values of faith, hope, and charity.

Who are our neighbors? In the Gospel, Jesus answers this question with the parable of the Good Samaritan—the leader ran on the road, who had no son or sister to come for him. Pope Benedict tells us that the "extraordinary bond" of love should help us as disciples of Christ to action. (see Parable of the Good Samaritan, 15:19-37).

What should our loving action look like? The Catholic tradition recognizes two types of necessary response that we call the Two Feet of Love in Action:

1. **Charitable Works**: Meet basic needs and individuals.
   - Volunteering
   - Support
   - Donate
   - Food banks
   - Homelessness shelters
   - Education

2. **Justice and Rights**: Address structural issues that deny justice to our neighbors.
   - Advocacy
   - Awareness
   - Action

What you will need:
- Materials Needed
  - Markers or chalk
  - Construction paper and glue
  - Coffee cup challenge
  - Mirror
  - Compass
  - Ruler
  - A sandwich
  - A story

How this session can help you:
- This facilitator’s guide can help you as you lead a group of high school age participants to learn about and reflect on living out the call to discipleship through these two distinct, but complimentary, areas of response to love of neighbor. If there are any questions about the Two Feet of Love in Action, please contact the USCCB Office to Assist Volunteers with Disabilities.
The Process of Conscience Formation

- Approaching issues with an openness to seek the truth.
- Studying Sacred Scripture and the teaching of the Church.
- Examining facts and background information.
- Prayerful reflection

- FCFC, no. 18
Two Duties

“Both opposing evil and doing good are essential obligations.”
- FCFC, no. 24
Called to Engage

• Requires knowing what the church teaches
• Firm in our commitment to our faith
• Seeing the other truly as a beloved child of God
• And know that not all viewpoints hold same weight
• Resources for authentic conscience formation
What does ongoing participation look like? Examples from USCCB’s WeAreSaltAndLight.org
“In today’s world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia.”

-Fratelli Tutti, no. 30
Helping Catholics Respond

➢ Be beacons of light by bringing the best of our faith to “work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter.” (Fratelli Tutti, no. 225)

➢ *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* previously instructed about the value of ongoing engagement.

➢ Regular ongoing conscience formation is critical.
Civilize It: A Better Kind of Politics - Pledge

Charity
➢ To affirm through my words and actions the dignity of every person, each made in God’s image. Even those with whom I disagree are made in his image.
➢ To respectfully listen in order to understand experiences different from my own.

Clarity
➢ To engage in critical examination to ensure that my perspectives are rooted in truth, that my sources of information are unbiased, and that I do not open myself to manipulation by partisan interests.
➢ To be open to the process of dialogue that can require change of perspective—my own and others’—in service to the inviolable dignity of all and the common good.

Creativity
➢ To be a bridgebuilder who participates in constructive dialogue based in shared values, a mutual exchange of gifts, and the humility to together seek the good.
➢ To see differences in perspective as opportunities for creative tension which can yield solutions for the common good.
- Presents an *actual framework* for Catholics to engage with one another and with people of good will.
- Pledge is an opportunity for *both* outward and inward action
- Opportunity for evangelization!
Tips for Dialogue

- Begin with prayer
- Establish guidelines for the conversation
- Identify core values for each party
- Listen attentively and commit to no interruptions
  - Use “I” statements
- Be charitable and assume the best intentions
- Ask questions to understand
- Use agreed upon language
Practical Resources

➢ Prayer, Reflection, and Practical tools
➢ Civilize It Prayer
➢ Group or individual reflection guides
  ➢ 5 Tips from Pope Francis
  ➢ Loving our Neighbor through Dialogue
➢ Examination of Conscience
➢ All available bilingually and culturally adapted
➢ All at www.CivilizeIt.org
Thank you!

Questions?