



Voting and Our Common Home: Reflections from the Catholic Tradition


September 4th, 2024

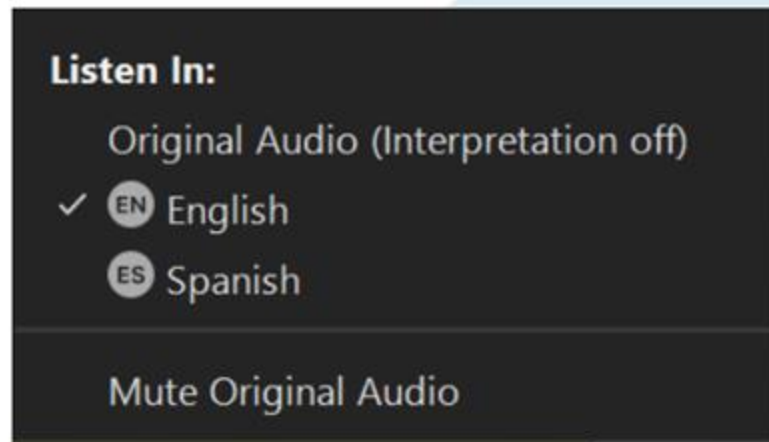


Incluiremos la grabación de la interpretación en español con el correo electrónico que mandaremos en los próximos días.

Cómo escuchar la interpretación de idiomas

Windows | macOS

1. En los controles correspondientes a su reunión/seminario por Internet, haga clic en  .
2. Haga clic en el idioma que le gustaría escuchar.



(Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en Mute Original Audio (Silenciar audio original). Notas:

- Debe unirse al audio de la reunión a través del audio de su computadora/VoIP. No puede escuchar la interpretación de un idioma si utiliza las funciones de audio de marcación o llamada telefónica.

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RECORDING

The webinar is being recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to everyone who registered within the next 24-48 hours.

Questions

Please submit your questions in the Q/A box.

Chat

Please remember to be respectful and civil in all Chat interactions.

OPENING PRAYER

(led by Connor Murray)

All Christian life is meant to be at the same time profoundly contemplative and rich in active work. It is true that we are called to create a better world. But we are first of all called to a more immediate and exalted task: that of creating our own lives. In doing this, we act as co-workers with God. We take our place in the great work of mankind, since in effect the creation of our own destiny, in God, is impossible in pure isolation. Each one of us works out his own destiny in inseparable union with all those others with whom God has willed us to live. We share with one another the creative work of living in the world. And it is through our struggle with material reality, with nature, that we help one another create at the same time our own destiny and a new world for our descendants. ~ Thomas Merton

May Thomas Merton's words remind us that we are the Lord's creation and He works within us always, and may we remember that we truly have the potential to create a better world if only by allowing Him to guide us towards love and communion through our words, our actions, and our choices.

Voting and Our Common Home: Reflections from the Catholic Tradition



**Most Rev. Joseph Jude Tyson,
Bishop of Yakima**



**Daniel R. DiLeo, PhD
Director, Justice and Peace Studies Program
Associate Professor, Creighton University**

**Moderator: Kayla Jacobs, Catholic Climate Covenant
Opening prayer: Connor Murray**

Voting and Our Common Home

Reflections from the Catholic Tradition

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Associate Professor and Director, Justice and Peace Studies Program

Creighton University



<https://bit.ly/CovenantVoting>

Faithful Citizenship and Values

- Faith: “Adequate response” to God’s love (*Catechism*, no. 142).
- Pope Francis: “An authentic faith...always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 183).
 - “Essentially, these values are: truth, freedom, justice, love” (*Compendium*, no. 197).
 - “It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected” (*Laudato Si’*, no. 138).
 - Transmit values *and* oppose distortions of those values.
 - St. John Paul II: There is an “essential difference between an unhealthy form of *nationalism*, which teaches contempt for other nations or cultures, and *patriotism*, which is a proper love of one's country. True patriotism never seeks to advance the well-being of one's own nation at the expense of others . . . Nationalism, particularly in its most radical forms, is thus the antithesis of true patriotism, and today we must ensure that extreme nationalism does not continue” (1995 address to the UN).

Faithful Citizenship and Values

- Faith: “Adequate response” to God’s love (*Catechism*, no. 142).
- Love: Will and act for the good (St. Thomas Aquinas).
 - “Love affects not only relationships between individuals but also ‘macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones’...” (*Laudato Si’*, no. 231).
 - Politics (politiká): Activities that organize and structure a community.
 - U.S. Bishops: “Dignity can be realized and protected only in community. In our teaching, the human person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community” (*Economic Justice for All*, no. 14).
 - Himes & Himes: “Politics matters because people matter (*Fullness of Faith*).

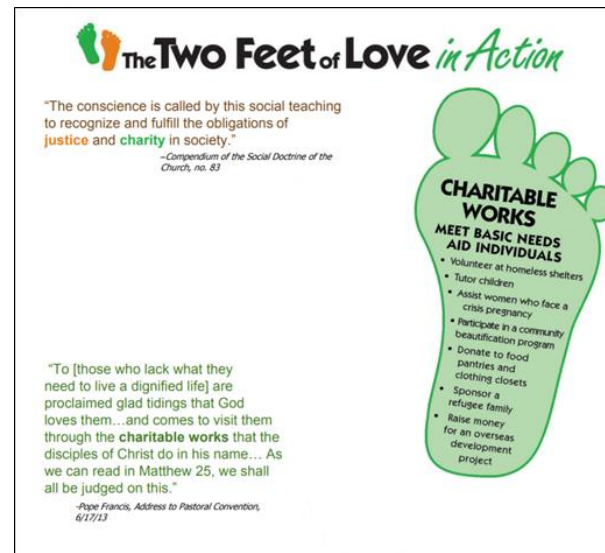
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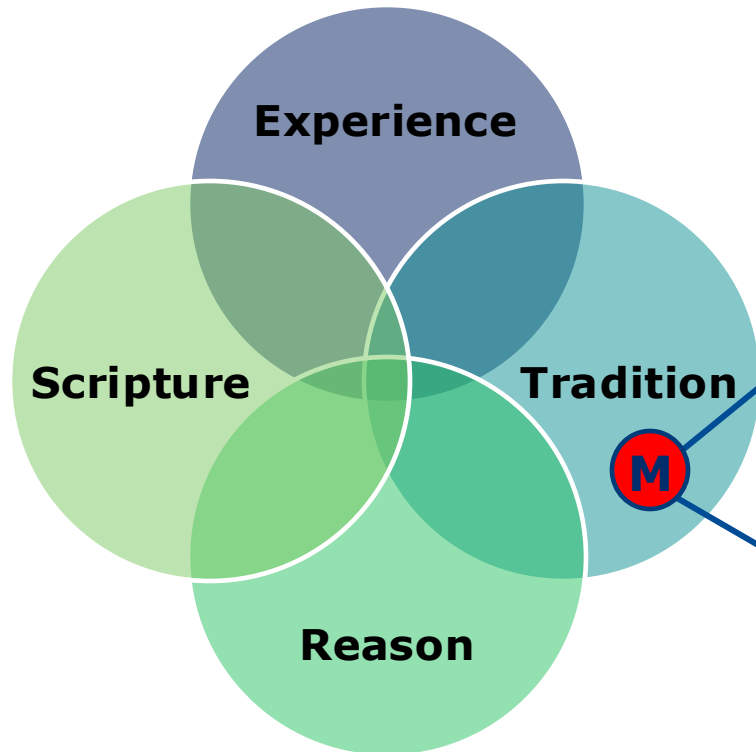
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 - Politics (politiká): Activities that organize and structure a community
 - U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB): “Participation in political life is a moral obligation” (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 13).
 - “The Church is involved in the political process but is not partisan. The Church cannot champion any candidate or party. Our cause is the defense of human life and dignity and the protection of the weak and vulnerable” (*FCFC*, no. 58).

Conscience

- “The most secret core and sanctuary of a person. There [one] is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in [their] depths” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 16).
 - Capacity to enact values by discerning whom to be and what to do.
- “Catholics have a serious and lifelong obligation to form their consciences in accord with human reason and the teaching of the Church” (*FCFC*, no. 17).

Magisterium and Conscience

Four Sources for Conscience Formation



Dogma: Infallible moral teachings owed assent of faith

- Mostly universal moral imperatives like "Love"

Doctrine: *Non*-infallible norms owed "Religious Docility of Will and Intellect"

- Particular teachings

Prudential Judgment: *Non*-infallible applications of Dogma and Doctrine owed conscientious obedience

- Concrete applications, e.g., public policy

Conscience

- One “must always obey the certain judgment of [their] conscience” (*Catechism*, no. 1790).
- Pope Benedict XVI, then Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger: “Over the Pope as the expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority there still stands one’s own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, if necessary, even against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority” (“Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II”).
- Pope Francis: “We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them” (*Amoris Laetitia*, no. 37).

Conscientious Voting

- Prudence applies general values to particular circumstances.
- Reasonable minds may disagree: “In matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles” (St. Thomas Aquinas).

Conscientious Voting

- USCCB: “These decisions should take into account:
 - “A candidate’s commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue” (*FCFC*, no. 37).
 - “Candidates’ integrity, philosophy, and performance” (*FCFC*, no. 41).

Conscientious Voting – Issues

- **Values transcend issues, and no issue has a monopoly on a value.**
 - “As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate’s position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter’s support” (*FCFC*, no. 42).
 - Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, “Consistent Ethic of Life”
 - “Asking these questions along the spectrum of life from womb to tomb creates the need for a consistent ethic of life. *For the spectrum of life [value] cuts across the issues* of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, modern warfare and the care of the terminally ill...
 - “The use of this principle exemplifies the meaning of a consistent ethic of life. The principle which structures both cases, war and abortion, needs to be upheld in both places. It cannot be successfully sustained on one count and simultaneously eroded in a similar situation” (“A Consistent Ethic of Life,” 1983, emphases added).

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 - Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, “Consistent Ethic of Life”
 - Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exalutate*
 - “Defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the **dignity of a human life [value]**, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development...
 - “Equally **sacred**, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection” (nos. 101-102, *emph. added*).
 - Bishop John E. Stowe, OFM Conv.: “Without the environment to sustain **human life** you can’t have **human life**” (*emph. added*).

Conscientious Voting – Issues

- **No issue has infallible, i.e., dogmatic “preeminence.”**
 - USCCB: “The threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority” (*FCFC*, “Intro. Note”).
 - *Non*-infallible prudential judgment owed conscientious obedience, i.e., “we expect Catholics to give our moral judgments serious consideration when they are forming their own views on specific problems” (*The Challenge of Peace*).
 - Cardinal Robert McElroy, “On Voting with Faith and a Conscience”:
 - “There is no mandate in universal Catholic social teaching that gives a categorical priority to either of these issues as uniquely determinative of the common good.
 - “The death toll from abortion is more immediate, but the long-term death toll from unchecked climate change is larger and threatens the very future of humanity.
 - “Both abortion and the environment are core life issues in Catholic teaching.
 - “The designation of either of these issues as the preeminent question in Catholic social teaching at this time in the United States will inevitably be hijacked by partisan forces to propose that Catholics have an overriding duty to vote for candidates that espouse that position. Recent electoral history shows this to be a certainty.”

Conscientious Voting – Issues

- Even if someone prudentially judges that one issue is preeminent...
- **No solution has a monopoly on addressing an issue.**
 - “Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature” (*Laudato Si'*, no. 139).
 - Reasonable minds may disagree: “In matters of action, truth or practical rectitude is not the same for all, as to matters of detail, but only as to the general principles” (St. Thomas Aquinas).

Conscientious Voting – Issues

- **“Intrinsic evil” is of limited help to voting discernment.**
 - “Intrinsic evil”: Act is always wrong, cannot be justified (*Catechism*, nos. 1753-5).
 - St. John Paul II: “[E]xamples of such acts: ‘Whatever is hostile to life [value] itself, such as any kind of homicide, genocide, abortion, euthanasia . . . whatever violates the integrity of the human person [and is] offensive to human dignity [value], such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution and trafficking in women and children; degrading conditions of work which treat labourers as mere instruments of profit’” (*Veritatis Splendor*, no. 80).
 - *Does not* communicate relative moral gravity.
 - *Does not* identify a solution.
 - *Does not* guide cooperation with evil.

Conscientious Voting – Issues

- **“Cooperation with evil” expands conscientious voting potential.**
 - Formal cooperation: Intentional, prohibited | Material: Unintentional, permitted
 - “When a Catholic does not share a candidate’s stand in favor of abortion and/or euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons” (Cardinal Ratzinger, “Vatican, US Bishops: On Catholics in Political Life”).
 - “Reason” is a value and “proportionate” means balancing interconnected values that cut across issues. Ecology and life:
 - Bishop Stowe: “Without the environment to sustain human life, you can't have human life.”
 - Cardinal McElroy: “The death toll from abortion is more immediate, but the long-term death toll from unchecked climate change is larger and threatens the very future of humanity.”

Church Teaching on Climate Change



- **St. John Paul II:** “[The] ‘greenhouse effect’ has now reached **crisis** proportions as a consequence of industrial growth, massive urban concentrations and vastly increased energy needs” (1990 World Day of Peace Message).
- **Pope Benedict XVI:** “Can we remain indifferent before the problems associated with such realities as climate change? (2010 World Day of Peace Message).
- **USCCB:** *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good* (2001).
- **Pope Francis:** “Climate change is one of the principal challenges facing society and the global community” (*Laudate Deum: On the Climate Crisis*).

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- No issue has infallible, i.e., dogmatic “preeminence.”
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- “Cooperation with evil” expands conscientious voting potential.
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