



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS - ON - CATHOLICS & VOTING

Why should my faith have any bearing on my vote?

Because we are baptized into Jesus Christ, our mission is to serve God and neighbor, especially those neighbors who are most in need. All that we do in life must be done in the light of that mission. Since the political world is where society makes the decisions that most significantly affect human dignity and the common good, voting is an essential way for us to serve our sisters and brothers.

How do I decide who to vote for?

Pope Francis has said that we should **study the issues, pray, and then vote with our consciences**. The United States Bishops' document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* talks in detail about the issues we are urged to consider before we vote. These include first of all **abortion** and other serious threats to human life and dignity including **racism, the environmental crisis, poverty, the death penalty, migration, and global conflict**. *Forming Consciences* also asks us to "take into account a candidate's commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence a given issue." To see what *Faithful Citizenship* has to say about these issues and other critical concerns, go to catholicnh.org/voting for links to *Faithful Citizenship* and the Diocese of Manchester's own pamphlet called *Voting for the Common Good*.

Will our pastors tell us who to vote for?

No. The Catholic Church teaches that decisions about voting are to be made by individual Catholics, using their well-formed consciences. No one else can tell you who you must vote for in any election.

Doesn't the Constitution say that we are supposed to separate our faith from our politics?

No. Constitutions restrict what the government can do, not what citizens can do. Moreover, the United States and New Hampshire Constitutions both uphold the right to the free exercise of religious faith.

In addition, as you can see the issues presented in *Faithful Citizenship* are not uniquely "Catholic" issues. Our Catholic faith is *why* we care about these issues, but people of other faiths or no faith at all also consider these issues to be vitally important.

