

CONSCIENCE AND THE CATHOLIC VOTER – 5TH OF 8

“In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.”

- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 13

Since participation in political life is a moral obligation, Catholics need to form their conscience with the mind and heart of the Church on issues of consequence. This outline is the fifth of eight, which will examine important moral and political issues. This fifth outline will provide an overview of the issue of immigration.

Immigration

The first principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the dignity of the human person. From the moment of conception, each person is made in the image and likeness of God. This principle teaches us then that every immigrant, documented or undocumented, is made in God’s image and deserves our love and respect as a child of God.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has written:

The Church supports the human rights of all people and offers them pastoral care, education, and social services, no matter what the circumstances of entry into this country, and it works for the respect of the human dignity of all especially those who find themselves in desperate circumstances. (Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 2000)

Thus our starting point in discussing the immigration issue is one of mutual respect and the recognition of the dignity of our fellow man, especially the immigrant among us. One who has traveled to Latin American countries in particular can understand some of the desperate circumstances which drive migrants to our border seeking a better life.

Of course, the Church recognizes that a sovereign nation has a right and a responsibility to protect its own borders. As Pope Francis has stated:

Can borders be controlled? Yes, each country has a right to control its borders, who enters and who leaves, and countries that are in danger—of terrorism or the like—have more right to control them more . . . (Pope Francis, Interview with the Spanish newspaper El País on January 22, 2017)

The sovereignty of nations is consistent thought in Catholic Social Teaching as is further explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 2241:

Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants’ duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws, and to assist in carrying civic burdens.

In summation, Catholics approaching the immigration issue must maintain a balance between caring for the dignity of every human person, be they documented or undocumented in our nation, while appreciating the necessity of each nation state to regulate its borders for the common good. Given the prosperity in the United States of America, it is also important for our nation to strive to seek to help, as best as we are able, those seeking a better life:

The more prosperous nations are obliged, to the extent they are able, to welcome the foreigner in search of the security and the means of livelihood which he cannot find in his country of origin. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2241)

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Learn more and watch videos at www.awakencatholic.org/election. Read the party platforms: Democratic Party, <https://bit.ly/3hrosqg>; Republican Party, <https://bit.ly/3hqWV8D> (Note: Rep. Party voted to continue their 2016 Platform)

OCTOBER

fast for holy families

We invite you to join in the diocesan-wide initiative to reconnect with our faith and one another during the months of September, October, and November. Each month will focus on a pillar of the Christian life with a specific intention from our diocesan prayer.

In October, we will fast for the intention of holy families. More information will be shared in the bulletin and social media. You can also visit ReconnectToledo.org/October.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Second Week of October



Fast

You might choose other works of charity or exercises of piety to take the place of fasting and abstinence. This week be extra cheerful during the day, and smile at everyone you meet.



Pray

Create a prayerful environment in your home. Does your home reflect your faith? Are prayer materials easily accessible in your home? If not, this fall could be a great opportunity to make the Faith more physically present in your home. We don't need anything elaborate, but even just placing simple pieces of sacred art around the home or in a "prayer corner" is a fantastic way to center your day and family life on God. We can also place Bibles and Rosaries in a convenient location, to help encourage prayer.

-from FamilyRosary.org



Reflect

The term "Domestic Church" refers to the family, the smallest body of gathered believers in Christ. John Paul the Great was proud to be a champion of the family and its crucial role in the life of all Christians. Along with the many letters and homilies directed to the family, he also wrote *Familiaris Consortio*, where he identifies four primary tasks that each family (Domestic Church) should strive to accomplish:

- Forming a community of persons
- Serving Life Participating in the development of society
- Sharing in the life and mission of the Church



Read

For Parents: *Discernment of Spirits in Marriage, Ignatian Wisdom for Husbands and Wives*, by Fr. Timothy Gallagher

For Kids: *The Princess & the Kiss* for girls, and *The Squire and the Scroll* for boys, by Jennie Bishop

Reconnect
navigating Catholic life through a pandemic

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



“Fratelli tutti”

With these very first words of his third and newest Encyclical Letter, signed by Pope Francis in Assisi and published on October 3rd, the vigil of the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Holy Father quotes his namesake in an address to all his brothers and sisters, proposing to them “a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel.” In the introduction, the Pope mentions how he has taken his inspiration from the saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy; how the issues of human fraternity and social friendship have always been a concern of his; and how, in this Encyclical, he has sought to bring together reflections he has spoken of repeatedly and in other contexts, situating them in a broader context of reflection.

This Encyclical represents a summation of the underlying vision that the Holy Father has proclaimed throughout his papacy: “It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Brotherhood between all men and women” (n. 8).

In the current worldwide situation in which we find ourselves, strained by the effects of a pandemic, and the resulting polarization,

isolation and division, it is not hard to see why Pope Francis strives to offer a message of concord instead of discord, turning to the Gospel Parable in which Jesus tells of a man assaulted by thieves and lying injured on the wayside. He writes: “The parable eloquently presents the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world. In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside. The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good. At the same time it warns us about the attitude of those who think only of themselves and fail to shoulder the inevitable responsibilities of life as it is” (n. 67).

It is Pope Francis’ conviction that the practice of social friendship, whether it be between nations, peoples or individuals, is one where each person knows and maintains his or her identity, but is also able to know and respect the

identity of others and work toward “coming up with shared goals that transcend their differences and can thus engage in a common endeavor” (n. 157). Further, the way forward to a new political future based on fraternity and social friendship begins with “moving beyond ourselves” which requires dialogue: “Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns” (n. 203). And it is religion which can play such a significant role in helping the dialogue of social friendship which leads to a greater sense of fraternity in our political world. Touching as he has before on topics of import in the realm of the Church’s social teaching, Pope Francis highlights that the religions of the world are called to the service of fraternity.

In receiving this new Encyclical Archbishop Jose Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote: “In analyzing conditions in the world today, the Holy Father provides us with a powerful and urgent vision for the moral renewal of politics and political and economic institutions from the local level to the global level, calling us to build a common future that truly serves the good of the human person. For the Church, the Pope is challenging us to overcome the individualism in our culture and to serve our neighbors in love, seeing Jesus Christ in every person, and seeking a society of justice and mercy, compassion and mutual concern.”

As we receive this new Encyclical, we affirm that among Catholics, among other Christians and

those of other religions, “the effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us to recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters” (n. 274). And we understand more deeply that “The Church has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities. She works for the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity. She does not claim to compete with earthly powers, but to offer herself as a family among families, this is the Church, open to bearing witness in today’s world, open to faith, hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother” (n. 276).

In releasing this new Encyclical, the Holy See concluded: “Faced with those injured by the shadows of a closed world and still lying by the roadside, we are invited by Pope Francis to make our own the world’s desire for fraternity, starting with the recognition that we are all ‘*Fratelli tutti*,’ brothers and sisters all.” May this be the starting point for us all.

The Pope’s Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) may be found at bit.ly/fraternity2020.



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