



Catholic Conference  
of Illinois

## **Election 2016: Weigh Your Conscience Before Casting Your Ballot**

The general election on November 8 offers Illinois residents the opportunity to vote for candidates for U.S. president, Congress, and the state legislature.

The Catholic Church is nonpartisan, and does not endorse candidates nor tell parishioners which candidates they should elect. The Church does offer guidance for discernment as parishioners make their decisions on how to vote with a properly formed conscience.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has updated its document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which may be found at [www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/index.cfm).

The Catholic Conference of Illinois encourages you to carefully review the seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching listed below as you consider candidates. More information may be found at [www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org).

### ***Seven Key Themes of Catholic Social Teaching\****

#### ***Life and Dignity of the Human Person***

Human life is sacred, and the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society and of Catholic social teaching. Abortion, physician-assisted suicide, cloning, embryonic stem cell research and racism are evils to be guarded against and opposed. Our promotion of human dignity and life also moves us to work for an end to war and the death penalty.

#### ***Care for God's Creation***

We are called to protect the planet, living in relationship with all of God's creation. Pope Francis underscores the importance of our stewardship of the Earth in his encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. In it, he poses a key question: "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"

#### ***Protection of & Participation in the Family & the Community***

Social and economic policies affect our ability to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported. Pope Francis stresses the significance of the family in *Amoris Laetitia (The Joy of Love)*, observing that marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported by the state.

#### ***Rights of the Person Protected, & Each Person's Responsibilities Met***

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and to those things required for human decency, including food, water, shelter, employment and health care. As citizens, we all have duties to one another, our families and society.

#### ***Care for the Poor and Vulnerable***

While the common good embraces all, those in greatest need deserve our preferential concerns. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us, including children, the disabled, refugees, the elderly, the unemployed, the poor and the marginalized.

#### ***Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers***

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. Workers must have basic rights to decent work, fair wages, workplace safety, collective bargaining, private property and economic initiative.

#### ***Solidarity***

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers and sisters keepers. We work to create unity through dialogue and a civil discourse that is respectful of others.

\*Adapted from: [www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm)