



The Diocese of Manchester's Five Principles for VOTING AS PEOPLE OF THE EUCHARIST

1. **All our actions in the world of politics must make us credible witnesses to the presence of the Risen Lord and prompt other people to wonder about "this hope of ours."** 1 Pet 3:15.
2. **Love - not political partisanship or ideology - is what motivates all our political decisions and actions.** We are involved in politics in order to carry out the Lord's command that we wash the feet of our sisters and brothers, especially those who are poor or who have little standing in the eyes of the world. Jn 13. We must do this work with "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another." Col 3:12-15.
3. **The communion that we celebrate in the Eucharist binds us to other people more powerfully than any political affiliation does.** The Eucharist compels us to recognize in all people, including political opponents, "brothers or sisters for whom the Lord gave his life, loving them to the end." See Pope Benedict, Apostolic Exhortation *The Sacrament of Charity*, §88.
4. **We view politics through the lens of faith, not the other way around.** The Lord has called us for the victory of justice, not for the victory of a particular candidate or party. No political party or candidate responds completely to the demands of faith or of Christian life. See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, §573. In all our actions, it must be obvious that the primary object of our desire is the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. **Our ultimate goal is nothing less than to transform the public square in the love of God through "the offering of our lives, our fellowship with the whole community of believers, and our solidarity with all men and women."** See *Sacrament of Charity*, §§11 and 94.



Some Other Things to Think About Before Voting

Who is this candidate?

What are the candidate's commitments, character, integrity, and ability to influence issues? Will this person have respect for other people and for the rule of law? (See *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* §37; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1931; Pope St. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* §44)

How does this candidate measure up against the fundamental issues of Catholic Social Teaching?

The Dignity of the Human Person. Each human being, from the youngest infant in the womb to the oldest living person, is **created in the image and likeness of God**. Thus, each person has an immense dignity which cannot be diminished or erased. This dignity must be respected **at every moment of a person's life, from conception to natural death**. The Church defends against what Pope Francis calls "the throwaway culture," which falsely says that a person's dignity depends on certain characteristics like race, abilities, health, youth, wealth, or power. (See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* §§105-159)

The Common Good. We look first to **the good of individuals and society as a whole, and not to what is in our own self-interest**. The common good encompasses things such as the defense of basic human needs (like food, housing, and health care); freedom of religion and conscience; the dignity of work and workers; and care for God's creation, which is a sign of our concern especially for the poor, who suffer the most from attacks on the environment. (See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* §§164-184)

Subsidiarity is the principle that **decisions and actions be made at the lowest level where they can adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good**. How the state relates to the family, which is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for creating and nurturing children, is one of the primary ways that this principle applies. (See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* §§185-191)

Solidarity is the "firm and persevering determination to commit oneself...to the good of all and of each individual, **because we are all really responsible for all**." "In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit." Pope St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 38-40. This principle calls us to recognize all as our sisters and brothers, to have empathy for other people, to be peacemakers, to transform unjust structures, to pursue justice, and to show a preferential concern for the poor and vulnerable, "including all who are marginalized in our nation and beyond- unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, victims of injustice and oppression, and immigrants." *Faithful Citizenship* 54. (See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* §§192-196)

Who is my neighbor?

The Good Samaritan is our model. As Pope Francis reminds us, "Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders." *Fratelli Tutti* §69. *Jesus replied, "Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim? The man answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."* (Lk 10:25-37)(NAB).

Additional Resources

- » Diocese of Manchester further information on issues and voting, and a link to *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*: www.catholicnh.org/vote
- » United States Conference of Catholic Bishops voting resources page: www.faithfulcitizenship.org (includes the booklet *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*)
- » *Parable Magazine*, including "Finding Communion" column: www.catholicnh.org/parable
- » "Finding Communion" podcast: www.catholicnh.org/podcast