

VOTE WITH MERCY

Reflecting on the Elections and Voting from a Catholic and Mercy Perspective

Discernment Questions in Making Decisions about Voting:

As important as issues are, “we generally do not vote for issues, but for candidates. In America today a faith-filled voter is called to approach voting from a stance of bridge-building and healing for our nation... But voting for candidates ultimately involves choosing a candidate for public office, not a stance, nor a specific teaching of the Church. And for this reason, faithful voting involves careful consideration of the specific ability of a particular candidate to actually advance the common good.” *Bishop McElroy*

Besides considering the whole range of life and justice concerns, we must calculate the moral character and competence of those we choose to govern and set national policy by asking ourselves these questions of candidates understanding that there is no one perfect candidate.

- Is there a capacity for mutuality, dialogue, and peacebuilding especially with a willingness to engage in the embedded systemic racism that has existed from the beginning of US history, a racism that has influenced other countries?
- Is there honesty, compassion, decency, respect, toward all people, a basic non-violent approach in speech, attitude, and policies?
- Is theirs a vision of democracy, human rights, and international power which includes understanding that the current situation of our brothers and sisters, particularly those who are most vulnerable and often marginalized by poverty and injustice must be remedied including immigrants, minorities, women and children?
- Is there a realization to that the obligation to “love our neighbor” has an individual and local dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment that our world and societies are inextricably interrelated including the world-wide effects of global climate change?
- Is there compatibility with the total legacy of Catholic social teaching

Pope Francis

In his March, 2018 Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete Exsultate*, Pope Francis said, (101) “Our defense of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred... 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.” In his June 3, 2020 General Audience, Pope Francis said, “We cannot turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life.”

Pope St. John Paul II

In his 1999 visit to the U.S. Pope St. John Paul II said, “The new evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life who will proclaim, celebrate, and serve the Gospel of life in every situation.” He added “To choose life involves rejecting every form of violence” including “poverty and hunger, armed conflict, the death penalty, euthanasia, drug trafficking, racism and reckless damage to the natural environment.” In the closing liturgy of his last trip to the U.S. he said: “Catholics are called “to eradicate every form of racism, a plague which is one of the most persistent and destructive evils of the nation.”

Resources for Further Reflection-

We share the following as resources to consider, with none intended to be the one resource that will provide all of the context to your consideration of Catholic Social Teaching and the Mercy Critical Concerns when you cast your vote.

- **A REFLECTIVE VOTING GUIDE: Creating Communion at the Intersection of Racism, Migration & Climate Crisis-**
https://lcwr.org/sites/default/files/resolutions/attachments/2020_voter_guide_region_vii_final.pdf
- **Conscience, Candidates, and Discipleship-**
<https://www.sdcatholic.org/bishops/bishop-mcelroy/conscience-candidates-and-discipleship-in-voting/>
- **The Challenge of Forming Conscience – USCCB-**
<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/The-Challenge-of-Forming-Consciences-for-Faithful-Citizenship-Part-2.pdf>
- **Elections Issue - Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center-**
<https://www.ipjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/AMOSsummer2020-fl2-WEB.pdf>
- **Questions to consider before reviewing a Voter Guide-** compiled by Conference for Mercy Higher Education-
<https://mercyhighered.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Voting-Guide-Pre-Questions-2.1.pdf>