



September 1, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As the end of the summer approaches, the electoral season is well underway throughout the United States. As Catholics, we are called to be responsible citizens, and, as such, to engage actively in public life. It is particularly important to fulfill our obligation to exercise our right to vote. I urge you to do so. Our votes have a great impact on the moral and social fabric of our communities. Equally important is the obligation to vote according to our conscience, which must also be *rightly formed*; that is, guided by Sacred Scripture and the teachings of our Church.

In the document, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the bishops of the United States remind us that as we participate in public life, we are called to bring our principles and values to the public square. This is not merely a suggestion; it is a profound duty that stems from our commitment to uphold the dignity of every human life, to promote the common good, and to seek justice for all, especially the most vulnerable among us.

In today's world, navigating the complexities of political issues can be daunting. We are bombarded with information—some accurate, some misleading. The challenge lies in discerning truth from falsehood and understanding how our faith intersects with civic responsibility. Engaging with our faith while participating in the electoral process enables us to give witness to our beliefs. We lead with compassion, integrity, and a commitment to justice. When we vote with an informed conscience, we are not just fulfilling a civic duty; we are fulfilling our responsibilities as Christ's disciples.

Bishops, priests, deacons and other teachers of the faith are responsible to assist fellow Catholics in forming consciences guided by Church teaching. As such, we do not tell Catholics that they should or should not vote for a particular candidate or political platform. We all need to properly form our consciences, and as stated in *Faithful Citizenship*, to “grow in the virtue of prudence to approach the many and varied issues of the day with the mind of Christ.” As you prepare to cast your vote, prayerfully consider how each candidate's positions align with our Catholic values -- dignity of the human person, care for the poor and marginalized, respect for the immigrant and refugee, and the importance of family, just to name a few. I encourage you to review *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* from the USCCB. This document and additional resources are available at www.usccb.org/offices/justice-and-peace/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship.

Finally, please join me in prayer for our country and all those who are seeking election to public office. Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide our electoral process and that the election will proceed peacefully, without any form of violence, and with a civil discourse that respects the dignity of every person – regardless of their political party. Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, pray for us!

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg