

NO ONE WHO HAS THE LIVING GOD FOR HIS LORD
CAN STAY DEAD

Jesus was asked a lot of questions in his public life. Today he is asked to weigh in on which is the greatest of all the Commandments. He does not hesitate at all: “You shall love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with all thy strength.” And then he adds: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” These two commandments sum up the law and the prophets. They are the foundational basics. But we must put flesh on these bones. Because we live in a very flesh and blood world.

Tuesday a week is Election Day. The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops has reissued a document to help us as citizens to make an informed decision. Please listen to what they are saying.

91. As Catholics, we are led to raise questions for political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. Our focus is not on party affiliation, ideology, economics, or even competence and capacity to perform duties, as important as such issues are. Rather, we focus on what protects or threatens the dignity of every human life...

92. Catholic teaching challenges voters and candidates, citizens and elected officials, to consider the moral and ethical dimensions of public policy issues. In light of ethical principles, we bishops offer the following policy goals that we hope will guide Catholics as they form their consciences and reflect on the moral dimensions of their public choices. Not all issues are equal; these ten goals address matters of different moral weight and urgency. Some involve intrinsically evil acts, which can never be approved. Others involve affirmative obligations to seek the common good. These and similar goals can help voters and candidates act on ethical principles rather than particular interests and partisan allegiances. We hope Catholics will ask candidates how they intend to help our nation pursue these important goals:

- Address the preeminent requirement to protect the weakest in our midst—innocent unborn children—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies the supports they need to make a decision for life.
- Keep our nation from turning to violence to address fundamental problems—a million abortions each year to deal with unwanted pregnancies, euthanasia and assisted suicide to deal with the burdens of illness and disability, the destruction of human embryos in the name of research, the use of the death penalty to combat crime, and imprudent resort to war to address international disputes.
- Protect the fundamental understanding of marriage as the life-long and faithful union of one man and one woman and as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false "gender" ideologies; and provide better support for family life morally, socially, and economically, so that our nation helps parents raise their children with respect for life, sound moral values, and an ethic of stewardship and responsibility.

- Achieve comprehensive immigration reform that offers a path to citizenship, treats immigrant workers fairly, prevents the separation of families, maintains the integrity of our borders, respects the rule of law, and addresses the factors that compel people to leave their own countries.
- Help families and children overcome poverty: ensuring access to and choice in education, as well as decent work at fair, living wages and adequate assistance for the vulnerable in our nation, while also helping to overcome widespread hunger and poverty around the world, especially in the areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.
- Provide health care while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.
- Continue to oppose policies that reflect prejudice, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of unjust discrimination.
- Encourage families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation, with full respect for individuals and groups and their right to address social needs in accord with their basic moral and religious convictions.
- Establish and comply with moral limits on the use of military force—examining for what purposes it may be used, under what authority, and at what human cost—with a special view to seeking a responsible and effective response for ending the persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

My friends, these are the basic moral tenets we must weigh as we prepare to cast our ballot. We must each pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Which candidates are the ones who most closely align with our moral point of view and will seek to respect those views if elected to public office.

AND, we must pray for calm and peace in the aftermath of the election. There is no place for violence, rage, taunting, destruction of another's property. As citizens of this country we are better than that way of acting. We as Catholics who live a moral life will be held to a higher standard by Our Lord who has entrusted us with our precious faith. Please know that I am praying for all of you as you deliberate. Please pray for me.

May the Lord bless us all this day and give us his peace.