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**Center of  
Concern**

Center of Concern researches, educates, and advocates from Catholic social tradition to create a world where economic, political, and cultural systems promote sustainable flourishing of the global community.

Founded 1971  
[www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org)

Faith,  
Citizenship,



& The 2016 United  
States Election

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# Catholic Social Thought and Politics

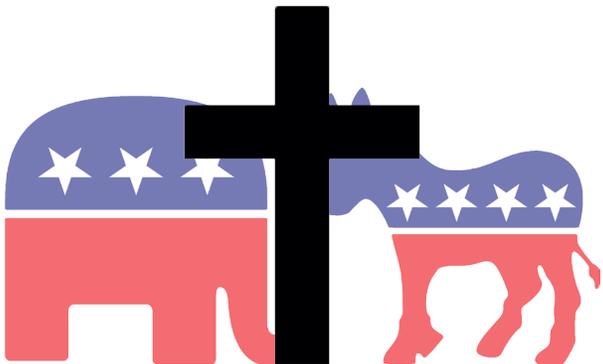
Catholic social thought (CST) is meant to bridge all political divides and offer teachings that are rooted in Scripture and tradition in the Catholic faith, not political ideology. The U.S. Bishops, in their 1986 statement, *Economic Justice for All*, stated that, "... the teachings of the Church insist that government has a moral function: protecting human rights and securing basic justice for all members of the commonwealth."

In this election season, how will you be a "faithful citizen" and an informed voter with a moral compass, guided by Catholic social thought? Below you will find a prayer for the election, several reflection questions, and resources to help you explore various domestic and international issues related to the upcoming election.

## PRAYER FOR THE ELECTION YEAR

by Anna Misleh

God of mercy, our nation is in a time of great transition. With all of the injustice and fear in our world today, we ask you to inspire us and guide us as we participate in the upcoming presidential elections. We seek a government that upholds and protects human rights and justice for all its citizens, regardless of race, class, gender, or religion. Move and inspire us by your presence among us in the most vulnerable in our society. For their tears are your tears, their pain is your pain, their suffering is your suffering. In gratitude for the right to vote, we pray, Amen.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Is there a specific social issue that you are passionate about? What is the platform of current political candidates on that issue?
- How can you invite other people of faith (friends, co-workers, family members) into open and respectful, but challenging dialogue about the upcoming election?
- Which Catholic social thought principles are related to government, politics, and elections?
- If you are not comfortable connecting politics and your faith, why? If you are comfortable, how can you become even more engaged as a faithful citizen?
- What steps can you take as a concerned citizen of faith to raise your voice for important political issues?

## RESOURCES

Faithful Citizenship (USCCB): [bit.ly/FaithCitizen](http://bit.ly/FaithCitizen)

*Outlines key points in CST that help guide Catholics as they participate in the 2016 presidential elections.*

Jesuit Social Research Institute: [www.loyno.edu/jsri](http://www.loyno.edu/jsri)

*Offers short summaries of CST and various issues that are influenced by public policy.*

Crux Now: [www.cruxnow.com](http://www.cruxnow.com)

*"Covering all things Catholic," this Boston Globe Media website takes the doctrine, liturgy, practices, and traditions of Catholicism and places them in the context of modern society.*

Unquiet Americans: U.S. Catholics and America's Common Good by Gerard V. Bradley: [bit.ly/UnquietAmericans](http://bit.ly/UnquietAmericans)

*A book of essays touching upon CST, the truth about human equality and political liberty, and religious faith as it bears upon public life and the public engagement of lay Catholics.*

Politico: [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com)

*A "tough, fair, and fun" media platform that covers political news in accessible formats: print, online, mobile, video, and events.*