

2016 ELECTION TOOLKIT



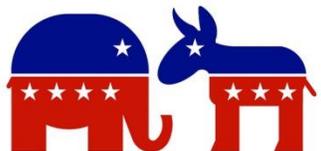
Register by October 11, 2016

Must be a **U.S. Citizen** and **18-years old** (by Election Day)

For details visit: www.elections.il.gov/InfoForVoters.aspx

Tweet us at: **#IRegistered2Vote** when you register

"WE NEED TO PARTICIPATE FOR THE COMMON GOOD. SOMETIMES WE HEAR: A GOOD CATHOLIC IS NOT INTERESTED IN POLITICS. THIS IS NOT TRUE: GOOD CATHOLICS IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN POLITICS BY OFFERING THE BEST OF THEMSELVES SO THAT THE LEADER CAN GOVERN." - POPE FRANCIS, 9/16/13



Part I – Prayers

Introduction

As people of faith, it is our moral calling to be politically engaged. Practicing faith-filled citizenship is our right under the U.S. Constitution. It is our responsibility to engage in the processes that remind all candidates to make relief for the most vulnerable people a priority. To convey this message, concerned people of faith can and should be involved in all aspects of electoral campaigns. One of the best times to raise issues is during election campaigns. It is at these times that our government's elected officials are listening the most and are making and establishing promises, priorities, and plans. Elections have become times to re-assess how our common resources – our taxpayer dollars – are being used and what the role of our government should be. It is our duty as people of faith to make sure those who are affected by these important issues are taken into consideration in the upcoming election. One of the major ways we can make our voices heard is by casting our vote. Educate yourself and others on the issues and the candidates, and encourage all people to register and vote. Pray!

(Adapted from Bread for the World)

Prayer Before an Election

Lord God, as the election process approaches, we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront our city/state/country, and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our community. We ask for eyes that are free from blindness so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters, one and equal in dignity, especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and poverty. We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those abandoned, men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or gender. We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of leaders who will bring us closer to your Kingdom.

We pray for discernment so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word, live your love, and keep in the ways of your truth as they follow in the steps of Jesus and his Apostles and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(Adapted from "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship")

Prayer for Elections

We pray for our nation in the coming weeks, that we move beyond our fears and concerns to discern what will serve the common good for all members of our society.

We pray that we may respond to the call of solidarity rather than the call to separate interests. May we be more concerned with successful community than with individual success.

We pray that we consider ways through difficult economic problems that are compassionate and just for all who struggle for their daily bread.

We pray that we dwell deeply on the call to serve those in poverty and recognize that all humans have the right to a life with dignity and with the basic services to promote human flourishing.

We pray that we take seriously the call to be peacemakers, despite the complexities in our local, national, and global conflicts.

We pray that we honor our responsibilities as citizens without resorting to the polarization that limits our listening.

Guide us in the coming weeks in our process of discernment so we serve you through our choices and our concern for the common good. Amen.

(Source: Education for Justice; By: Jane Deren)

Prayer for the Election Year

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.

(Source: Faith, Citizenship, & the 2016 U.S. Election, Education for Justice; By: Anna Misleh)

Prayer for Our Nation's Leader

Almighty God, you alone reign over all the peoples of the earth. Guide us, we pray, in selecting leaders who will serve with courage, integrity, and humility. Bless our leaders with a vision of, and commitment to, the common good. Give us the persistence as citizens to speak out for justice until all your children have a place at the table. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

(Source: Elections Matter – Bread for the World)



A good Catholic meddles in politics, the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern. But what is the best that we can offer to those who govern? Prayer! Pope Francis

L: In this year of General Election, we pray to the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to Faithful Citizenship.

Our Response: **Holy Spirit of Wisdom and Love, teach us Your ways or Lord hear our prayer.**

L: For all the people in the United States, that we may be faithful citizens during this time of elections in all that means, we pray:

L: For all candidates during this election season, that they may respect the will of the people and be motivated by genuine service for the common good, we pray:

L: For Catholics who are called to make practical judgments regarding good and evil choices in the political arena, we pray:

L: For all citizens that we may have an understanding of the right of every human person which flows from a deep respect for all life, we pray:

L: For voters that we realize that the value of human life in all the various issues, promoting a world of peace, for marriage and family life, religious freedom, preferential option for the poor and economic justice, health care, migration, education, promoting justice and countering violence in our world, combatting unjust discrimination, care for our common home and global solidarity and working for the elimination of poverty, we pray:

L: That we may work for voter registration in many different places through this country, we pray:

L: That we may realize the importance of voting as a Christian duty and as a faithful citizen, we pray.

L: That we may continue to grow in our understanding of the issues during this election season and grow in forming our conscience, we pray.

L: That we may continue to grow in being Faithful Citizen, we pray

L: That we may pray for our candidates and for the election process this year, we pray

L: That our political leaders will rebuild our communities and bring an end to the cycles of violence and killing, we pray...

L: That our political leaders will seek to reduce the disparity between the rich and the poor, we pray...

L: That our political leaders will actively promote racial justice and equal opportunity for everyone...

L: That our political leaders will recognize earth's goodness, champion environmental justice and uphold our responsibility to be stewards of God's creation, we pray...

L: That our political leader will support adequate, affordable and accessible health care for all, we pray...



Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good. I cannot wash my hands, eh? We all have to give something!
Pope Francis

Part II - Resources

Faithful Citizenship (USCCB): bit.ly/FaithCitizen

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

U.S. Bishops' document "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

Vote Smart: www.votesmart.org

Vote Smart's mission is to provide free, factual, unbiased information on candidates and elected officials to ALL Americans

Evaluating Judges: www.voteforjudges.org www.chicagobar.org

Ballots: www.ballotready.org

The Office for Human Dignity & Solidarity – Immigration Ministry Advocacy Resources Faithful

Citizenship 2016 <http://catholicsandimmigrants.us8.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=1d8ac6d6eee5ba07d6848d488&id=4169207aad&e=36bb64fac6>

See Where Your Senate Candidates Stands on the Issues:

<https://networklobby.org/election2016/sidebysides>

A revolution of tenderness: *A 2016 Election Pope Francis Values Reflection Guide*

<https://popefrancis16.com/>

<http://2016election.procon.org/?gclid=CM3Pr52n9cwCFZA8gQodi6sFQw>

<http://interfaithpowerandlight.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Faith-Voter-Reflection-Guide.pdf>

Bread for the World voting helps: <http://www.bread.org/breads-i-vote-end-hunger-campaign>

NPR: What Role Has Immigration Played in This Year's Presidential Election?

<http://www.npr.org/2016/08/10/489433629/presidential-campaign-strategies-shaped-early-by-immigration>

10 Highlights from the Republican and Democratic Platforms: <http://onevote16.org/blog/10-highlights-from-the-republican-and-democratic-platforms/>

A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern. But what is the best that we can offer to those who govern? Prayer!

– Pope Francis

Questions to Consider When Reading About Candidates:

- How does each candidate talk about preventing mass shootings and gun violence in our streets?
- How does each candidate respond to questions about the wealth gap in this country? What ideas does she or he have for addressing this?
- What is each candidate's approach to conflicts in other parts of the world?
- Where does each candidate stand on a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants? On deportation? On detention of women and children in for-profit prisons?
- How does each candidate talk about climate change? Does he or she have any policies for addressing this issue?

(Adapted from *A Revolution of Tenderness: 2016 Election Pope Francis Voter Guide*)

Our Homework before We Vote:

November elections remind us that voter preparation time is NOW. Our Catholic social justice traditions have inspired people to educate, march, and even die for voting rights, equality, cosmos concerns, human dignity. Our faith impels us to be voters committed to compassion, education, fact-checking, passion for justice, responsible voting. Thorough, time-consuming voter preparation is essential.

Voting is a privilege and a responsibility. Voting choices have moral implications. As election season inundates media, how do we respond? These questions are offered as voter preparation aids. They are starters in our search for the most inclusive, visioning, justice-oriented candidates for each of the offices for which we have the PRIVILEGE and the RESPONSIBILITY to vote. They are motivators as we take seriously our moral obligation to vote responsibly.

If we watch campaign ads, how do we analyze them? Do we fact check the claims made in the ads? Do we study the connections between the ad and the individual/group that paid for the ad? What do these connections indicate?

If we are looking at statistics, who did the statistical analysis? What is their reputation?

What groups/individuals are financing the candidate? In what ways?

What other resources are impacting the election? Billboards, posters, parties, door-to-door visiting? How do we respond to the candidate flyers that populate our mailbox? Who is paying for these resources?

In the work history of the candidate, how was power exercised? Is the work history centered within for-profit corporations, government, not-for-profit agencies?

What is the focus of each lobbying group? How do these groups interact with the candidate?

How reliable is the political analysis of social media?

What are the characteristics of leaders that we need in this time, this area, this county/township, this state, this nation, internationally?

When I'm going to a candidate forum, do I prepare questions to ask the candidates? After attending a candidate forum, how do I make a decision about what I've heard—dialog with others who attended the forum, silent contemplation, incorporating the insights from research I've already completed, and? To which candidate(s) is the energy of the forum leading me?

What lenses do I as an individual bring to my analysis, my decisions? How do these lenses impact my conclusions?

How will my decision impact the justice and peace issues in the geographic area(s) the elected person will represent?

(Source: Project IRENE)

Elections Matter Handbook:

This handbook is a comprehensive but easy-to-read and easy-to-follow guide for individuals and churches that want to be engaged with candidates during election seasons. It includes coverage of legal issues for churches' involvement in campaigns as well as practical ways to raise the issue of hunger with candidates. This 24-page booklet is the ideal starting place if you or your church want to engage congressional candidates in the 2016 elections. You can access the handbook here: <http://www.bread.org/library/elections-matter-0>

