

St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church

359 West Areba Avenue • Hershey, PA 17033

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

September 25, 2016

PARISH OFFICE HOURS Sundays 9:00 AM-12:00 PM
Monday thru Friday 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM (closed 12:00-1:00 PM)
Phone: 717-533-7168 Fax: 717-520-0526
www.stjoanhershey.org office@stjoanhershey.org
Hospital Emergency Phone 805-7950
Convent 533-2864

PARISH OFFICE 717-533-7168
Rev. Alfred Sceski, Pastor Ext. 102
Rev. Steven Arena, Parochial Vicar Ext. 104
Rev. Michael Opoki, AJ, In Residence
Deacon Rodrigue Mortel, MD
Barbara Hasson, Parish Manager Ext. 107
John Triseik, Youth Coordinator Ext. 128
Beth Palmer, Director of Music Ext. 109
Susan Robison, Parish Secretary Ext. 100
Mary Butch, Secretary Ext. 115
Michelle Gutshall, Finance Manager Ext. 103
Jackie Abel, Director of Development Ext. 121
Earl Tropp, Director of Religious Education Ext. 122
Marcie Warner, Director of Religious Education Ext. 112
Betty Roksandic, REP Secretary Ext. 124

ST. JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL 717-533-2854
Sr. Eileen M. McGowan, D.M., Principal Ext. 118
Deb Rizzotto, Development Director Ext. 123
Joey Rubinic, Cafeteria Ext. 120
W.I.N.G.S. Program Ext. 117

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Wednesday - 5:00 to 5:30 PM, Saturday 4:00 to 4:45 PM

Sacrament of the Sick: Call the Parish Office.

Sacrament of Baptism: 1st & 3rd Sunday of each month
Parents are required to attend one class. Please call the parish office to register.

Sacrament of Marriage: Call the Parish office 9 to 12 months prior to the proposed wedding date.

Parish Membership: Welcome to St. Joan of Arc Parish. Please register on our website or stop in the Parish Office.

Bulletin Deadline: Monday before publication date by 9:00 AM.
Bulletin email: bulletin@stjoanhershey.org



MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil: 5:15 PM

Sunday Masses:

7:30, 9:00, 10:30 AM, 12:00, 5:30 PM

Daily Mass: Monday - Friday: 6:45 & 9:00 AM
Saturday: 9:00 AM

Rosary & Chaplet of Divine Mercy: 6:30 PM everyday

Chaplet of Divine Mercy: 9:30 AM everyday

Holy Days: Please refer to the website for information

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on First Friday of each month from after 9:00 AM Mass until 9:45 PM closing with Benediction.

Prayer Service at 7:00 PM during Exposition on First Friday.



We, the Eucharistic Community of St. Joan of Arc Parish, by the grace of God and through our participation in His Word, the Church's sacraments, and prayer, seek our eternal salvation.

We live out the doctrines and traditions of our Faith in communion with the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, established by Our Lord Jesus Christ.

With courage, we follow the example of our patron saint and invoke her intercession as we strive to know God, love God and serve God which moves us to actively promote and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the midst of our every day life.



Mass Schedule

Monday, September 26-Sts. Cosmas and Damian

6:45 AM Albert Steuer
9:00 AM Wayne Foust

Tuesday, September 27-St. Vincent de Paul

6:45 AM Sarah Lutz
9:00 AM Donald Eline

Wednesday, September 28-St. Wenceslaus and St. Lawrence Ruiz

6:45 AM Antonio Raia
9:00 AM Kenneth Murphy

Thursday, September 29-Sts. Michael, Gabriel and Raphael

6:45 AM John Luke Nantz
9:00 AM Joseph Krupa

Friday, September 30-St. Jerome

6:45 AM Sarah Lutz
9:00 AM Kevin Nye

Saturday, October 1-Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus

9:00 AM Effie & Joseph, Sr. & James Butch

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 2, 2016

Readings: Hb 1:2-3, 2:2-4; 2 Tm 1:6-8, 13-14; Lk 17:5-10

Faith is a gracious gift from God. It can neither be earned nor bought, only responded to with works of love and service. A vibrant faith can make us strong, loving, and wise, confident that God will guard us from all harm. He is the Rock of our salvation.

Vigil, October 1

5:15 PM Jean Leonard

Sunday, October 2

7:30 AM Special Intentions for a Dear Friend
9:00 AM Joseph Yashinsky
10:30 AM Herman & Irene Rossi
12:00 PM In celebration of Ed & Vi Gliot's 50th Wedding Anniversary
5:30 PM Mathew Kayser

Readings for the Week of September 25, 2016

Monday Jb 1:6-22; Lk 9:46-50

Tuesday Jb 3:1-3, 11-17, 20-23; Lk 9:51-56

Wednesday Jb 9:1-12, 14-16; Lk 9:57-62

Thursday Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 or Rv 12:7-12a; Jn 1:47-51

Friday Jb 38:1, 12-21, 40:3-5; Lk 10:13-16

Saturday Jb 42:1-3, 5-6, 12-17; Lk 10:17-24

We wish to thank the sponsor of the week
The Morrison Associates Optometry
for advertising in our bulletin.



Parish Forty Hours Devotion September 25, 26, 27

The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on the altar Sunday following the Noon Mass until 4 PM, then again Monday and Tuesday, following the 9 AM Mass until 7 PM. This is a grace filled opportunity for our parish. Please plan to stop by the Church to spend some time with Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

40 Hours Devotion begins Sunday, September 25th following the 5:30pm Mass. Father Philip Burger will be the Homilist.

The schedule is as follows:

Sunday, September 25-7:00 PM

Evening Prayer & Benediction including the Rite of Enrollment for all our Confirmation Prep students and their parents.

Monday, September 26-7:00 PM

Evening Prayer & Benediction including the Rite of Enrollment for all our First Holy Communion students and their parents.

Tuesday, September 27-7:00 PM

Evening Prayer & Benediction including the Rite of Rededication of Liturgical Ministers for our Lectors, EMHC, Choirs, Cantors, Instrumentalists, Ushers, Greeters, Altar Servers, Masters of Ceremony and Sacristans.

Liturgical Ministry Schedule for October 2, 2016

	5:15 PM	7:30 AM	9:00 AM	10:30 AM	12:00 Noon	5:30 PM
Lector	J.O'Hara	M. Spaeder	F. Ruggiero	K. Shovlin	B. Ryan	E. Abraham
EMHC	K. Harbaugh C. Evans J. Evans W. Lutz	D. Sheehan M. Duval C. Eimer	B. Frola J. Frola B. Hasson L. Kayser	J. Gusherowski J. Kreider C. Malloy R. Meinert	G. Kaiser A. Gould T. Mayan	V. Felice E. Frauenhoffer T. Kilcoyne J. McGruder
Servers	M. Coyle M. Coyle G. Harbaugh	St. Michael's Guard	A. Kulina D. Kulina C. Chardo	L. Gusherowski E. Gusherowski A. Gusherowski	T. Brown C. Edwards D. Matas	J. McInerney T. McInerney B. Seesholtz
MC	T. Harbaugh		N. Silvis	C. Vargo	M. Matas	C. Roche

Money Counters: F. Wetherhold, E. Gliot, J. Detweiler, J. Albanese, J. Tobias, M. Duval



This Week in our Parish

SUNDAY, September 25

9:00 AM REP K-Gr 6
6:30 PM Life Teen
7:00 PM Confirmation Prep
7:00 PM 40 Hours

MONDAY, September 26

9:45 AM Legion of Mary
3:00 PM Cadette Girl Scout Troop 11026
7:00 PM EDGE
7:00 PM Monday Evening Bible Study
7:00 PM 40 Hours

TUESDAY, September 27

9:30 AM Little Rock Scripture Study
1:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry
7:00 PM 40 Hours

WEDNESDAY, September 28

7:15 AM Wednesday Morning Coffee
4:15 PM REP K-Gr 6
5:00 PM Confessions
6:30 PM RCIA
7:00 PM I Thirst Prayer Group
7:00 PM Young Adult Ministry

THURSDAY, September 29

7:00 PM Adult Choir Rehearsal

FRIDAY, September 30

3:00 PM Junior Legion of Mary

SATURDAY, October 1

6:30 AM That Man is You
9:30 AM Respect Life Service
9:45 AM Blessing of the Animals
4:00 PM Confessions

SUNDAY, October 2-Blood Pressure Screening

9:00 AM REP K-Gr 6
1:00 PM Baptisms
2:00 PM Hour of Prayer
3:00 PM Confirmation Rehearsal
6:30 PM Life Teen
7:00 PM Confirmation Prep

MASS ATTENDANCE

September 17 & 18, 2016

5:15 - 235 7:30 - 199 9:00 - 397
10:30 - 400 12:00 - 226 5:30 - 386
TOTAL - 1843

ALTAR FLOWER MEMORIALS

MAIN ALTAR: In loving memory of our mothers
from Kendra & Jon Rankin

BLESSED MOTHER:

In loving memory of Frank Ferguson, Sr. from his family



SAINT JOSEPH:

In loving memory of Joseph Nestico
from the grandchildren

Eternal rest, grant unto them, O Lord

Please pray for the soul of **Mr. Leslie Demeter, Raymond Manari, and Evelyn McFarlane** who died recently. The parish community of St. Joan of Arc Church extends its deepest sympathy to their family and relatives on their loss.



If you would like to take the Pilgrim Cross into your home (for one week per year) and pray for vocations, please call the parish office at 533-7168.

This week **Sep 26-Oct 3** the Pilgrim cross will be in the home of the Filomena Cramer.

Next week **Oct 3-Oct 10** the Pilgrim cross will be in the home of the Joyce Nolan.



Blessing of the Animals will take place on Saturday, October 1st, 9:45 AM in front of the former Convent. Please remember to bring water and clean-up bags for your pet. In case of inclement weather, the blessing will be held across the street from the church under the walkway at the entrance to the school.



Parish Nurse Ministry Parish Nurses will be taking Blood Pressures next weekend after the Saturday 5:15PM and Sunday 7:30, 9:00, and 10:30AM Masses. Look for them in the School library, except after the 9:00 Mass, they will be in the cafeteria. It takes only a few minutes. All are welcome.



The St Joan of Arc Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts will be selling Popcorn and Nuts after Masses the weekends of 9/24-25, 10/1-2 & 10/8-9. Or, see a Scout for a personal order. Please consider supporting our Scouts and their programs.



OCTOBER IS RESPECT LIFE

Respect Life Ministry will sponsor a memorial service and recitation of the rosary to create awareness & enlightenment of God's love for all humanity and our need to bring out the sanctity of life in all its stages. It will be held following the 9AM Mass on Saturday, October 1st.

Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank Mobile Unit will be accepting donors after Mass on Sunday, Oct 16 from 8:30 AM until 1:30. They will be located on the school parking lot. Thank you for your participation in this drive. Your donation may help save the lives of three people.



RELIGIOUS APPRECIATION DINNER

An opportunity for us all to show our appreciation for our Priests, Deacons and Religious. Sponsored by the Lebanon District Council of Catholic Women and held at Mary Gate of Heaven, Myerstown on Thursday, September 29 at 6 PM. This is a lovely evening and wonderful opportunity to give support back to those who support us throughout the year day in and day out! Tickets are \$20/person and everyone from our parish is invited to attend. Please contact Julie Groh at 566-5838 or brogroh@msn.com to purchase tickets or further information.

2016 Diocese of Harrisburg Women's Conference

Ladies, this conference is for you! On Saturday, October 15th, the Diocese of Harrisburg will offer our 2nd Annual Women's Conference at McDevitt High School. The theme this year is *Wrapped In God's Merciful Love*.

Kimberly Hahn's Keynote is entitled: *Rome Sweet Home: How the Mercy of God led me to Become a Catholic*

There will also be Workshop Sessions, Confession, Eucharistic Adoration, Praise and Worship, Holy Mass, and fellowship with hundreds of women to refresh your soul as we continue to celebrate this Jubilee Year of Mercy. Pamphlets are available in the office and back of church.



The following parishioners or family members are ill. Please remember them and all the sick of the parish in your prayers.

- Vincent Savini, David Liddy, Kaitlin Buser, B.J., Jessica Harris, Marguerite Caso, Ethna Shank, Joan Ott, Amy Ott Hatfield, Frank Bolduc, Mary Bogrette, Lexie Bland, David Harris, Lily Carney, Roseanne Ayala, C.J., Ken & Diane Kolovich, Nancy Stewart, Ashley Tatangelo, Edward Nerino, Jeanne Spagnolo, Joseph Fagnan**

Reminder: Names will remain on the list for six weeks. Please call to have them placed back on the prayer list.



Attention men of St. Joan of Arc: Are you looking to deepen your relationship with God? Be a better husband? Become a more loving father?

Build friendships with other like-minded men? And seek to be the best man you can be? Then Come Join Us...

Saturday Morning, October 1, 2016, 6:30 - 8:00 am

Contact Info: Chad Brickley,

chadabrickley@gmail.com or contact parish office

"I THIRST" Prayer Group invites everyone to attend



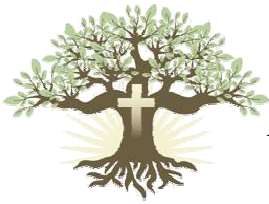
THE WILD GOOSE Faith Series. The series is designed to open your heart to the person of the Holy Spirit through revealing scripture and personal testimony. The meetings include a 25 minute video teaching followed by small group discussions. Meetings will be held in the Cafeteria Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.. All are encouraged to attend. We look forward to seeing you there.

For more information contact Lou at 717-583-0240 or mathfamily1@yahoo.com.

OPPORTUNITY Our bulletin publisher is looking for a career minded, self-starting advertising sales person for an entry level position which is both challenging and rewarding. Three to four days of overnight travel per week required. Extensive training. Commission and all expenses are paid. Benefits. Send resume to: Diocesan Publications, Ltd. 698 Limekiln Road, New Cumberland, PA 17070 or email to mjurosky@diocesan.com.

Small Crystal Cross lost in church on September 11. It has great sentimental value. If found, please contact the parish office. Thank you!





STEWARDSHIP

Managing God's Gifts To Us

We Are A Tithing Parish Following God's Plan For Giving

Weekly Tithing: \$26,409

Weekly Budget: \$28,462

Year to Date Budget Variance: -\$19,146

**Why should I vote/
Does the Church tell me who to vote for?**



In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is considered a virtue, and participation in political life – especially voting – is considered a moral obligation. In their document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the U.S. Bishops note,

“The Church’s obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith.” Being a faithful citizen requires a well-formed conscience, aided by reading Scripture, reflecting on Church teaching, examining the issues and praying.

The Catholic Church neither endorses nor opposes specific candidates for public office or political parties, nor does it tell Catholics for whom to vote. Rather, each Catholic must prayerfully reflect on the candidates’ positions in light of teachings of Christ and His Church, and participate in the privileged opportunity to promote the common good as they cast their vote. Use that opportunity on November 8. For more information, visit www.hbgdiocese.org/vote.

EVERY ABORTION KILLS AN INNOCENT HUMAN BEING

Every new life begins at conception. This is an irrefutable fact of biology. It is true for animals and true for humans. When considered alongside the law of biogenesis – that every species reproduces after its own kind – we can draw only one conclusion in regard to abortion. No matter what the circumstances of conception, no matter how far along in the pregnancy, abortion always ends the life of an individual human being. Every honest abortion advocate concedes this simple fact.



YOUTH AND EDUCATION NEWS



LIFE TEEN

This Week - “Exorcist-Jesus as Healer”-No worries, we are not having a real exorcism next week at Life Teen! Teens will be encouraged to evaluate their faith and the relationship they have with Jesus. We will learn to make powerful prayer petitions and not just empty platitudes.

Next Week- “Candlelight Rosary”-The parish is invited as the teens will lead us in praying the Rosary. We will meet following the Life Teen mass at 6:45 behind the school in the field. We will begin the Rosary at 7.



EDGE - is for grades 6-8th and meets on Monday nights in Meeting Room C from 7-8:15. The next EDGE nights will be on October 3 and 24.



Calling all Young Adults between the ages of 21-35, married or single! We meet on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7-8:30 in Mtg Room C. We will continue our new series September 28 with “The Marian Dogmas.”

If you are interested in anything above or have questions, please call John at 717-533-7168 ext 128 or email him at stjoanofarclifeteen@gmail.com.

SCHOOL NEWS



Dine at **Piazza Sorrento** or **Mr. Sorrento's** in Hershey on **September 28, 2016 from 11AM-10PM** and **10%** of the cost of your meal will benefit our kids through the St. Joan of Arc School PTO.

find vouchers at the back of the church



Lonely? Sad? Discouraged?

Going through a tough time – emotionally or spiritually? Struggling with a life stress? Or simply feeling down? Consider letting a Stephen Minister help. A Stephen Minister is a member of our congregation who is trained to listen, care, encourage, pray, and walk alongside you during difficult times. It’s confidential, free, and helpful. If you think you would like to meet with a Stephen Minister call Diane Sheehan 717-533-2285 or Casey Sheehe 717-579-7871. *Bear one another’s burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* Galatins 6:2. Confidentiality is the foundation of the Stephen Ministry.



OCTOBER 8th, Noon to 7pm

St. Joan of Arc Church - Areba Street Parking Lot

MENU FEATURES:

- *Beer Bratwurst*
- *Sauerkraut*
- *Soft Pretzels*
- *Schmidt's Hot Sausage*
- *Hot Dogs*
- *Fried Potato Cakes*
- *Root beer*
- *October Brew*



**FREE
Admission**

** Food & Beverages are available "a la carte" or as a Meal Package.*



**Sponsored by:
THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**



The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship



Part I of II: Our Call as Catholic Citizens

This brief document is Part I of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.



"If indeed 'the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics,' the Church 'cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.'"¹ So writes Pope Francis, quoting Pope Benedict XVI.

Our nation faces many political challenges that demand well-informed moral choices:

- The ongoing destruction of a million innocent human lives each year by abortion
- Physician-assisted suicide
- The redefinition of marriage
- The excessive consumption of material goods and the destruction of natural resources, harming the environment as well as the poor
- Deadly attacks on Christians and other religious minorities throughout the world
- Efforts to narrow the definition and exercise of religious freedom
- Economic policies that fail to prioritize the needs of poor people, at home and abroad
- A broken immigration system and a worldwide refugee crisis
- Wars, terror, and violence that threaten every aspect of human life and dignity.²

As Catholics, we are part of a community with profound teachings that help us consider challenges in public life, contribute to greater justice and peace for all people, and evaluate policy positions, party platforms, and candidates' promises and actions in light of the Gospel in order to help build a better world.

Why Does the Church Teach About Issues Affecting Public Policy?

The Church's obligation to participate in shaping the moral character of society is a requirement of our faith, a part of the mission given to us by Jesus Christ. As people of both faith and reason, Catholics are called to bring truth to political life and to practice Christ's commandment to "love one another" (Jn 13:34).

The US Constitution protects the right of individual believers and religious bodies to proclaim and live out their faith without government interference, favoritism, or discrimination. Civil law should recognize and protect the Church's right and responsibility to participate in society without abandoning its moral convictions. Our nation's tradition of pluralism is enhanced, not threatened, when religious groups and people of faith bring their convictions into public life. The Catholic community brings to political dialogue a consistent moral framework and broad experience serving those in need.

Who in the Church Should Participate in Political Life?

In the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation. As Catholics, we should be guided more by our moral convictions than by our attachment to any political party or interest group. In today's environment, Catholics may feel politically disenfranchised, sensing that no party and few candidates fully share our comprehensive commitment to

human life and dignity. This should not discourage us. On the contrary, it makes our obligation to act all the more urgent. Catholic lay women and men need to act on the Church's moral principles and become more involved: running for office, working within political parties, and communicating concerns to elected officials. Even those who cannot vote should raise their voices on matters that affect their lives and the common good. Faithful citizenship is an ongoing responsibility, not just an election year duty.

How Can Catholic Social Teaching Help Guide Our Participation?

In the words of Pope Francis, "progress in building a people in peace, justice and fraternity depends on four principles related to constant tensions present in every social reality. These derive from the pillars of the Church's social doctrine, which serve as 'primary and fundamental parameters of reference for interpreting and evaluating social phenomena.'"³ The four principles include the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity. Taken together, these principles provide a moral framework for Catholic engagement in advancing what we have called a "consistent ethic of life" (*Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 22).

Rightly understood, this ethic does not treat all issues as morally equivalent; nor does it reduce Catholic teaching to one or two issues. It anchors the Catholic commitment to defend human life and other human rights, from conception until natural death, in the fundamental obligation to respect the dignity of every human being as a child of God.

Catholic voters should use Catholic teaching to examine candidates' positions on issues and should consider candidates' integrity, philosophy, and performance. It is important for all citizens "to see beyond party politics, to analyze campaign rhetoric critically, and to choose their political leaders according to principle, not party affiliation or mere self-interest" (USCCB, *Living the Gospel of Life*, no. 33). The following summary of the four principles highlights several themes of Catholic social teaching for special consideration: these include **human rights and responsibilities, respect for work and the rights of workers, care for God's creation, and the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.**⁴

The Dignity of the Human Person

Human life is sacred because every person is created in the image and likeness of God. There is a rich and multifaceted Catholic teaching on human dignity summarized in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Every human being "*must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness . . .*" This entails above all the requirement not only of simple respect on the part of others, especially political and social institutions and their leaders with regard to every man and woman on the earth, but even more, this means that the primary commitment of each person towards others, and particularly of these same institutions, must be for the promotion and integral development of the person" (no. 131). The *Compendium* continues, "It is necessary to 'consider every neighbor without exception

as another self, taking into account first of all his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity' (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 27). Every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural program must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each human being over society.¹⁵

Subsidiarity

It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, and local realities—in short, for those economic, social, cultural, recreational, professional, and political communities to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth.⁶ The family, based on marriage between a man and a woman, is the fundamental unit of society. This sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children must not be redefined, undermined, or neglected. Supporting families should be a priority for economic and social policies. How our society is organized—in economics and politics, in law and public policy—affects the well-being of individuals and of society. Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate in shaping society to promote the well-being of individuals and the common good.

The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions; yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.⁷

The Common Good

The common good is comprised of “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily.”⁸

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if **human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met**. Every human being has a right to life, a right to religious freedom, and a right to have access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to ourselves, to our families, and to the larger society.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. An economic system must serve the dignity of the human person and the common good by **respecting the dignity of work and protecting the rights of workers**. Economic justice calls for decent work at fair, living wages, a broad and fair legalization program with a path to citizenship for immigrant workers, and the opportunity for all people to work together for the common good through their work, ownership, enterprise, investment, participation in unions, and other forms of economic activity. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day’s work for a fair day’s pay, to treat employers and coworkers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interests but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

We have a duty to **care for God’s creation**, which Pope Francis refers to in *Laudato Si’* as “our common home.”⁹ We all are called to be careful stewards of God’s creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future. Pope Francis, consistent with St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (World Day of Peace Message, 1990 and 2010), has lifted up pollution, climate change, lack of access to clean water, and the loss of biodiversity as particular challenges. Pope Francis speaks of an “ecological debt” (no. 51) owed by wealthier nations to developing nations. And he calls all of us to an “ecological conversion” (no. 219), by which “the effects of [our] encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in [our] relationship with the world around [us].”¹⁰ Indeed, this concern with “natural ecology” is an indispensable part of

the broader “human ecology,” which encompasses not only material but moral and social dimensions as well.

Solidarity

Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are *all* really responsible for *all*.” It is found in “a commitment to the good of one’s neighbor with the readiness, in the Gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to ‘serve him’ instead of oppressing him for one’s own advantage.”¹¹

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Our Catholic commitment to solidarity requires that we pursue justice, eliminate racism, end human trafficking, protect human rights, seek peace, and avoid the use of force except as a necessary last resort.

In a special way, our solidarity must find expression in the **preferential option for the poor and vulnerable**. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us—the unborn, those dealing with disabilities or terminal illness, the poor, and the marginalized.

Conclusion

In light of Catholic teaching, the bishops vigorously repeat their call for a renewed politics that focuses on moral principles, the promotion of human life and dignity, and the pursuit of the common good. Political participation in this spirit reflects not only the social teaching of our Church but the best traditions of our nation.

Notes

- 1 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 183.
- 2 This specific list of issues is taken from the Introductory Note to *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2015. For a fuller consideration, see the second document in this series, “The Challenge of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship; Part II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles” (2016), and the full statement of the bishops’ *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2015.
- 3 *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221.
- 4 These principles are drawn from a rich tradition more fully described in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* from the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005), no. 160. For more information on these principles, see *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, 2016, nos. 40ff.
- 5 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 132. This summary represents only a few highlights from the fuller treatment of the human person in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. For the fuller treatment, see especially nos. 124-159 where many other important aspects of human dignity are treated.
- 6 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 185.
- 7 *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Dignitatis Humanae*, nos. 4-6.
- 8 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 164
- 9 *Laudato Si’*, no. 77.
- 10 *Laudato Si’*, nos. 219 and 217.
- 11 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27)

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Part II of II: Making Moral Choices and Applying Our Principles

This brief document is Part II of a summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, which complements the teaching of bishops in dioceses and states.

Part I of the summary of the US bishops' reflection, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, considered the core principles that underlie Catholic engagement in the political realm. Part II is a consideration of the process by which these principles are applied to the act of voting and taking positions on policy issues. It begins with the general consideration of the nature of conscience and the role of prudence. The application of prudential judgment does not mean that all choices are equally valid or that the bishops' guidance and that of other church leaders is just another political opinion or policy preference among many others. Rather, Catholics are urged to listen carefully to the Church's teachers when they apply Catholic social teaching to specific proposals and situations.

How Does the Church Help the Catholic Faithful to Speak About Political and Social Questions?

A Well-Formed Conscience

The Church equips its members to address political questions by helping them develop well-formed consciences. "Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act. . . . [Every person] is obliged to follow faithfully what he [or she] knows to be just and right" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1778). We Catholics have a lifelong obligation to form our consciences in accord with human reason, enlightened by the teaching of Christ as it comes to us through the Church.

The Virtue of Prudence

The Church also encourages Catholics to develop the virtue of prudence, which enables us "to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806). Prudence shapes and informs our ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. Prudence must be accompanied by courage, which calls us to act. As Catholics seek to advance the common good, we must carefully discern which public policies are morally sound. At times, Catholics may choose different ways to respond to social problems, but we cannot differ on our obligation to protect human life and dignity and help build, through moral means, a more just and peaceful world.



Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of innocent human life, as in abortion. Similarly, human cloning, destructive research on human embryos, and other acts that directly violate the sanctity and dignity of human life including genocide, torture, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Nor can violations of human dignity, such as acts of racism, treating workers as mere means to an end, deliberately subjecting workers to subhuman living conditions, treating the poor as disposable, or redefining marriage to deny its essential meaning, ever be justified.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As St. John Paul II said, "The fact that only the negative commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment."¹ The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights such as a right to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive—including food, shelter, health care, education, and meaningful work.

Avoiding Two Temptations

Two temptations in public life can distort the Church's defense of human life and dignity: The first is a moral equivalence that makes no ethical distinctions between different kinds of issues involving human life and dignity. The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed. The second is the misuse of these necessary moral distinctions as a way of dismissing or ignoring other serious threats to human life and dignity. Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, environmental degradation, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care or housing, pornography, human trafficking, redefining civil marriage, compromising religious liberty,

or unjust immigration policies are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act.

Making Moral Choices

The bishops do not tell Catholics how to vote; the responsibility to make political choices rests with each person and his or her properly formed conscience, aided by prudence. This exercise of conscience begins with always opposing policies that violate human life or weaken its protection.

When morally flawed laws already exist, prudential judgment is needed to determine how to do what is possible to restore justice—even if partially or gradually—without ever abandoning a moral commitment to full protection for all human life from conception to natural death (see St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 73).

Prudential judgment is also needed to determine the best way to promote the common good in areas such as housing, health care, and immigration. When church leaders make judgments about how to apply Catholic teaching to specific policies, this may not carry the same binding authority as universal moral principles but cannot be dismissed as one political opinion among others. These moral applications should inform the consciences and guide the actions of Catholics.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.¹

What Public Policies Should Concern Catholics Most?

As Catholics, we are led to raise questions about political life other than those that concentrate on individual, material well-being. We focus more broadly on what protects or threatens the dignity of every human life. 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:

- Address the preeminent requirement to protect **human life**—by restricting and bringing to an end the destruction of unborn children through abortion and providing women in crisis pregnancies with the supports they need. End the following practices: the use of 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 the 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

as the central institution of society; promote the complementarity of the sexes and reject false “gender” ideologies; 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** and ensure 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 policy areas of development assistance, debt relief, and international trade.
- Ensure full conscience protection and **religious freedom** for individuals and groups to meet social needs, and so enable families, community groups, economic structures, and government to work together to overcome poverty, pursue the common good, and care for creation.
- Provide **health care** while respecting human life, human dignity, and religious freedom in our health care system.
- Continue to oppose policies that reflect racism, hostility toward immigrants, religious bigotry, and other forms of **unjust discrimination**.
- 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.
- Join with others **around the world** to pursue peace, protect human rights and religious liberty, and advance economic justice and care for creation.

Notes

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52.

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