

September 12, 2008

Brothers,

There is little doubt that the coming November elections may be the most significant in several decades if not longer. The word “change” is in the air because many Americans, Republican, Democrat or Independent, see a need for significant change in our country’s response to challenges. It is clear that there must be a different way of doing things both domestically and internationally.

Multiple issues including the war in Iraq, relations with countries around the world especially in the developing world, domestic issues including healthcare, poverty, housing, the viability of the economy and many others will be significantly affected by the outcome of the election.

- 47 million Americans cannot get affordable health insurance and the majority of those cannot get health insurance period.
- For every 10 unemployed Americans, there are only 4 available jobs.
- The country is in a recession but for the poor, most of who are the young and the old, this is a depression.
- Millions of Americans are in serious danger of losing their homes.
- There are serious international political and economic issues that cannot be handled by force but by negotiation and collaboration which has not been our strength in recent years.

The US Catholic Bishop’s in their document on Faithful Citizenship along with the leaders of many other faith traditions, have stressed the right to life and the dignity of the human person; call to family, community, and participation; seeking the common good; option for the poor and vulnerable; dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and caring for God’s creation as essential characteristics for us and for our leaders. They have called the faithful to participate in the elections as fully as possible and choose candidates on the basis of who best supports all of these basic themes in their policy decisions.

**Please consider becoming actively involved in the elections as perhaps you never have before.**

1. Study and discuss materials on the elections including the Bishops letter on “Faithful Citizenship” <http://www.usccb.org/faithfulcitizenship/FCStatement.pdf> and the material in the attached resource list. Perhaps a community discussion would be appropriate

2. Study candidate's positions on a range of issues and determine which of the candidates is best for the common good of all. Attend meetings with candidates. One resource comparing presidential candidates on the range of issues related to catholic social teaching can be found at [http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/voters\\_guide\\_new.pdf](http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/voters_guide_new.pdf)
3. Include the elections in community prayer. The Bishop's Conference has a novena [http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/docs/FC\\_Novena.pdf](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org/docs/FC_Novena.pdf) which might be used once a week between now and the elections.
4. Volunteer time in a local or national campaign
5. Be sure you are registered to vote in your local precinct. If you have changed your address in the last year, you may not be registered. Deadline in most places is October 7

Myles McCabe

### **Primary Resources for the 2008 Elections**

#### ***Faithful Citizenship* (US Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2008)**

The document states that proper formation of the conscience, prudence, and voting against evil are appropriate ways to weigh one's vote. It highlights seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching to help inform decision-making: right to life and the dignity of the human person; call to family, community, and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable; dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and caring for God's creation. A new website includes materials for educators and diocesan leaders, young Catholics, podcasts, bulletin inserts, and more: [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org).

#### **Alliance for the Common Good**

During the spring and summer 2,500 Catholics nationwide through regional meetings shaped what is being called the *Platform for the Common Good*. It expresses Catholic Social Teaching in terms of key issues which need to be addressed by candidates for election in November. The platform was ratified at a conference attended by more than 700 including five Marianists in July. It was also ratified by the Conference of Major Superiors of Men of which we are a part. The document was presented at both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions and will be used to hold elected officials accountable.

The *Platform for the Common Good* is an excellent resource for discussion.

[http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/Platform\\_for\\_the\\_Common\\_Good.pdf](http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/Platform_for_the_Common_Good.pdf)

There is also a one page summary of the Platform -

[http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/Platform\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.votethecommongood.com/files/Platform_Summary.pdf)

### **Voting for the Common Good: A Practical Guide for Conscientious Catholics (Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good)**

Like *Faithful Citizenship*, this 12-page guide draws from Catholic Social Teaching as a framework. It emphasizes voting for the common good, based on justice and calls for Catholics to vote based a candidate's potential effectiveness.

<http://www.csjboston.org/jpvotingcommon-good.pdf>

### **In Case You Need a Few More Resources**

#### **Election 2008: Voting the Common Good (Center of Concern)**

This guide focuses on the interconnected, global nature of many of the issues concerning voters in 2008: immigration, peace and conflict, and poverty are among them. Educational tools included with the package are: reflection questions; questions for candidates; educational resources; group processes for using materials; talking points; and a blog entry/op-ed.

<http://www.coc.org/election2008/>

#### **U.S. elections 2008: Loving our neighbor in a shrinking world (Maryknoll)**

This guide seeks to “make apparent the global impact” of US policy decisions. Like the Center of Concern, it focuses on the international common good based on the experiences of its missionaries. Issues include HIV/AIDS, migration, peace and security, economic justice, and climate change.

<http://www.maryknollogc.org/2008elections/index.htm>

#### **Election 2008: A Practical Resource (Sisters of Mercy)**

This guide provides key questions to ask of each candidate on the following issues: poverty, Earth, immigration, nonviolence, racism, and women. It also references other Catholic resources, including relevant articles, to inform thinking.

<http://www.sistersofmercy.org/images/stories/documents/resources/electionresource.pdf>

#### **Catholic charities – elections and Poverty**

<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1150&srcid=897>

#### **Voter's Guide for Serious Catholics (Catholic Answers)**

Discusses importance of voting for life.

[http://www.caaction.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=72](http://www.caaction.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=81&Itemid=72)

## **Election Events Around the Province invite Marianist Participation**

University of Dayton sponsored:

**Sept. 15:** Oscar Cardinal Rodriguez of Honduras on “An International Perspective on Justice and Politics: The US in the World.” Dinner begins at 5:30pm; Talk begins at 7:30pm at St. Luke’s Church in Beavercreek.

**Sept. 16:** Dayton Civic Scholars present: Judge A.J. Wagner and Speaker of the House Jon Husted on “How Does Civic Engagement Promote a Caring Community?” 7:30pm, KU Ballroom.

**Oct. 6:** The Forum on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition Today presents: E.J. Dionne, Jr., columnist and political analyst for the Washington Post, lecturer at Georgetown, and author of *Souled Out: Reclaiming Faith and Politics After the Religious Right* on “Faith And Politics in the 2008 Presidential Race” 8:00pm, KU Ballroom. ,

**Oct. 30:** Center for Social Concern and the Political Science Dept. present: “Faith and Voting: A Panel for the Perplexed” featuring Dr. Una Cadgan (American Studies), Dr. Kelly Johnson (Religious Studies), Dr. Jason Pierce (Political Science), and Fr. John Putka, SM (Political Science), and moderated by Dr. Chris Duncan (Political Science), 7:00pm, Science Center Auditorium.

Chaminade University sponsored:

In collaboration with the Dean of Students and Residence Life offices, Chaminade University will be presenting workshops and short sessions as well as give faculty resources drawn from the USCCB materials on "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship".

St Mary’s University sponsored:

Student Government Association is sponsoring Debate Watch nights with follow up discussions and is also organizing transportation to the polls on election day.

We are promoting the Bishops document *Faithful Citizenship* by providing the summary sheet in the chapel spaces and announcing their availability.

We also have other voter guides available from the Catholic Alliance for the Common Good and from Sojourners. We are thinking of repeating a panel presentation on *Faithful Citizenship* sometime in October. This panel was presented in the spring semester in conjunction with some events on civic engagement.

We are planning to have Sunday, **October 26** liturgies on campus with an election focus, asking the presiders to preach on the topic and have intentional prayers, etc. Also on Monday, **November 3** the weekly liturgy will be a campus wide prayer for the forthcoming election.

**Please share actions that your community or institution is taking to be involved in the November elections.**

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